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Evacuation continues
Police and Border Police evacuate five Beduin families from Ma'aleh Admunim yesterday. Stories, page 2.

Police: No new evidence in Bar-On affair

By RAINE MARCUS and EVELYN GORDON

The police have no new evidence which could shed light on the Aryeh Deri/Roni Bar-On affair, Inspector-General Assaf Hefetz admitted yesterday.

Yesterday, Channel 1 reporter Ayala Hasson, who first broadcast the controversial story last Wednesday, gave more information to the police team investigating the affair.

Hasson reported that Deri reached a deal with Prime Minister's Office Director-General Avigdor Lieberman that Bar-On, after his appointment as attorney-general, would arrange a plea bargain for Deri in his trial on corruption charges.

In exchange, Hasson said, Deri said he would ensure that Shas would agree to the Hebron redeployment.

According to senior police officers, Hasson's evidence is "only partial, and incomplete." In fact, said an officer, police are still very much in the dark.

"She cooperated," said an officer, "but refused to hand over concrete proof - tapes, transcripts, or documents, if there are any."

Hasson also refused to disclose her sources, citing journalistic immunity.

After examining the information they receive from the Israel Broadcasting Authority, police and the Attorney-General's Office will decide whether to apply for a court order to force the IBA to give them additional information, acting Attorney-General Edna Arbel told the Knesset Law Committee yesterday.

The committee was discussing the affair.

Arbel said she would much prefer to get the necessary information without a court order, and will not ask for one if the information IBA has already given is sufficient for police purposes. If the information now being withheld proves crucial to the investigation, however, she said she would go to court.

opinion a panel of judges should investigate the issue until all evidence is gathered. Although Kahalani added he has complete faith in the police's ability to investigate, judges may be preferable until all initial evidence is gathered in such a sensitive, high-profile affair.

In response to a question by Moshe Shahal (Labor), meanwhile, Law Committee chairman Shaul Yahalom (National Religious Party) retracted an earlier statement to the press in which he claimed the NRP's ministers had abstained in the vote on Bar-On's appointment because they knew of the alleged "Bar-On for Hebron" deal.

The retraction was issued after Education Minister Zevulun Hammer sharply criticized Yahalom for making the statement. Hammer said the reason for the abstentions was simply lack of information on Bar-On.

Yahalom said his original statement was based on an Israel Radio report to this effect, which he had not checked with the ministers themselves.

However, he said, he believes Hammer if the latter says this was not the case.

Much of the ensuing discussion centered on the issue of journalists' rights and obligation to protect their sources.

Yona Yahav (Labor) pleaded with Arbel not to force Hasson to reveal her sources, saying journalistic immunity is critical to the media's independence, and especially to investigative reporting.

Taleb a-Sanaa (Democratic Arab Party) agreed. Would it not be worse for society, he asked, if Channel 1's report were true, but no one had been willing to leak the story because they knew their identity would not be protected?

Alex Lubotsky (Third Way) responded that refusing to reveal information in this case would actually damage the concept of

journalistic immunity in the long term, because if people feel this immunity is being abused to allow the press to cast damaging aspersions without backing them up, there might be a backlash in favor of limiting immunity.

"It is not possible for someone to make such a serious accusation and then hide behind immunity!" added Rubi Rivlin (Likud). "How can [the accused] defend himself?"

Some of the MKs also sharply criticized the way Channel 1 handled the story. Silvan Shalom (Likud) said he was shocked that the IBA's legal adviser was not even consulted before the story ran.

"Do you think such a thing would happen in a newspaper?" he demanded.

Zvi Weinberg (Yisrael Ba'aliya) said he was also disturbed by how quickly Channel 1 ran with the story. Many people here are comparing the affair to Watergate, he said - but in Watergate, *The Washington Post* sat on the story for three months to be sure it had checked its facts.

"And why did you wait 48 hours to reveal that the prime minister was not involved?" he added.

MKs were also divided on what the consequences of the investigation should be. Several opposition MKs said that if Channel 1's accusations prove true, the government should resign.

Weinberg and Lubotsky, however, said this did not necessarily follow, since even according to Channel 1, Netanyahu was not personally involved.

Dedi Zucker (Meretz) said the investigation has grave implications - not only for the government, but also for public faith in the credibility of the press should Channel 1's report prove unfounded. This is true even if the police do not find enough evidence for an indictment, he said.

Swiss envoy to US resigns

By MARILYN HENRY and news agencies

Swiss Ambassador to the US Carlo Jagmetti resigned yesterday, a day after a Swiss newspaper published excerpts from a confidential report in which he compared the Nazi gold crisis to waging war.

In the report sent to Bern in December, Jagmetti described the barrage of allegations against Switzerland as a "war" the country "must fight and win on two fronts: foreign and domestic," according to an account in the Zurich weekly *SonntagsZeitung*.

"You cannot trust most of the adversaries," Jagmetti's report was quoted as saying. The adversaries were thought to be the World Jewish Congress and Sen. Alfonse D'Amato.

In Bern, Foreign Minister Flavio Corti said he would ask the Federal Executive to investigate how the confidential document was made public, adding Jagmetti had requested the inquiry.

Jagmetti, a career diplomat only a few months shy of retirement, became the focal point, as the issue of dormant Jewish accounts in Swiss banks quickly escalated into an indictment of Switzerland's war-time relations with the Nazis.

Last October, Jagmetti spoke openly about the mistreatment of

Holocaust survivors who had sought to recover their assets from Swiss banks. He also repeatedly pledged Switzerland's commitment to review its wartime history, but cautioned: "Accusations should not be made before records have been carefully analyzed, and sinister motives should not be attributed to measures taken out of genuine concern."

Jagmetti's resignation came days after Switzerland's biggest coalition party, the Social Democrats, called for the resignation of Economics Minister Jean-Pascal Delamuraz, who last month accused Jewish groups of "blackmail" for demanding a Holocaust compensation fund.

Delamuraz, who apologized after the WIC threatened a boycott of Swiss banks, rejected the call to quit.

The newspaper's excerpt of Jagmetti's report also recommended that Switzerland agree to one general payment to settle Jewish claims "because Jewish circles and Sen. D'Amato must be satisfied quickly" so that "calm will return on all levels."

Last week, the Swiss government proposed establishing a memorial fund for Holocaust victims, which D'Amato hailed as "an important first step." But, he said Friday, the amount must be

Syrian talks were to end by June '96

By DOUGLAS DAVIS and DAVID MAKOVSKY

Israel and Syria agreed early last year to successfully conclude peace talks by June 1996, but this was torpedoed by Shimon Peres's decision to hold early elections, chief Syrian negotiator Walid Mualeem said in an interview to be published shortly in the *Journal of Palestine Studies*.

"We set a deadline for ourselves, agreeing to close the remaining gaps and finalize all the elements of an agreement by June 1996, at which time we would send what we had agreed to a special drafting committee. The expectation was by September 1996, the final document would be ready," he said in the interview, conducted over a period of time ending in late November.

It remains unclear whether the

PN: Efforts being made to reach 'bridging formula,'
Page 2

interview still reflects Syrian thinking, especially in light of the recently disclosed letter from then-US secretary of state Warren Christopher suggesting that unsigned statements made by the last government do not bind the Netanyahu government.

A senior US official said yesterday that Damascus has a "tendency to ascribe formal status to things less than formal."

Mualeem said he thought Peres wanted to go to elections having already achieved peace with Syria.

Continued on Page 2

Molcho to head talks on final status

By DAVID MAKOVSKY

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's friend and attorney Yitzhak Molcho, who headed talks on Hebron, has been named chief negotiator for talks with the Palestinians on the final disposition of territories, the premier's aides said yesterday.

As mandated by the Hebron agreement, those talks are scheduled to resume in March and conclude in May 1999. The Prime Minister's Office announced that Foreign Minister David Levy was given the apparently honorific title of heading the steering committee on the Palestinian talks.

It appears likely that the Defense Ministry will head talks on implementing outstanding issues related to the interim agreement, such as dealing with the establishment of the Dahaniya airport in Gaza, seaport, and safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank.

Netanyahu's office announced that Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai will head the steering committee on security aspects of talks with Syria. So far, those talks have not yet resumed.

Continued on Page 2

Israel Radio ejects no-smoking officials

By JUDY SIEGEL

Israel Radio news department officials recently ejected Jerusalem municipal inspectors called in by a radio technician who "repeatedly violated" the law restricting smoking in the workplace. The *Jerusalem Post* has learned.

News director Shalom Oren told guards at the Romema quarter building not to let municipal inspectors giving fines for smoking into the building without his approval or that of radio director

Amnon Nadav.

The incident, which occurred on January 9, was "very serious and unprecedented in the country," said Dr. Alma Avni, head of the Health Ministry's occupational health department, which is charged with enforcement of the law banning smoking in all workplaces except in specially designated, closed "smoking rooms."

The incident began when technician Eitan Yefet complained to the municipality about Avishai Falhi, a radio announcer, and Yoel Nir, a Knesset reporter, for smoking in the windowless studio and the coordination room where technicians and journalists leave their recordings.

Inspectors Michal Moran and

Continued on Page 2



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NEWS

in brief

Ben-Natan may have died of medical problems

A military inquiry into the mysterious death of artillery recruit Pvt. Roi Ben-Natan found that there were no safety or disciplinary defects, giving rise to speculation he died due to medical complications. Ben-Natan was buried yesterday at Haifa military cemetery. He was found dead in his tent Sunday after he was sent by his commander to fetch his equipment. *Arieh O'Sullivan*

Father of five murdered

The body of Muhamed Abu Ali, a 40-year-old father of five, was discovered in a car by the entrance to Moshav Sdei Hemed yesterday evening. It appeared that Abu Ali, who owned a jewelry store and had recently moved to Kafr Kasim, was robbed before being shot in the head and neck, police said. *Tim*

MDA conference opens

A three-day conference of Magen David Adom's Friends' Associations from around the world opened yesterday at MDA's central blood facilities in Tel Hashomer. The associations function in 16 countries and raise money for first-aid equipment, ambulances and mobile intensive care units. The volunteers will discuss expanding the activities of the new MDA fractionation center, which prepares blood products (such as plasma and gamma globulin) for use here and is the only one of its kind in the Middle East. The participants will tour MDA facilities during their visit. *Judy Siegel*

PM: 'Bridging formula' with Syria being sought

By LIAT COLLINS

Efforts are being made to reach "a bridging formula" which will enable the resumption of the talks with Syria, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu told the Knesset plenum yesterday. He said this should be possible with good will on both sides, combined with the efforts of the US. He said it would be known very soon if these talks are possible. The same sentiments -- and almost the same words -- were used by Foreign Minister David Levy when he appeared before the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee in the morning. Netanyahu said he was encouraged to hear that Syrian President Hafez Assad had said peace is more important to Syria than to

Israel, although he noted that the value of the statement depends on the intentions behind it. He said Israel could not force the resumption of the talks on Syria if it does not want them. Netanyahu said there had been tension between Israel and Syria a few months ago, when the Syrians had moved troops, but the tension had largely disappeared and "we don't see any worrying signs at the moment." Levy said he is "optimistic" a formula will soon be found to enable the resumption of the talks. The formula needs to be one which will avoid forcing Syrian dictates on Israel, while allowing the Syrians to understand that there is a basis for talking, he said. He also used the term "bridging formula" several times.

Panel: Remove worship signs from Goldstein grave

By LIAT COLLINS

The Knesset Interior Committee is calling on the IDF to remove any signs around Baruch Goldstein's grave marking it as a place of worship and is asking the interministerial committee responsible for enforcing laws against incitement to suggest an alternative site for the grave. OC Planning Maj.-Gen. Shaul Mofaz, who was OC Central Command at the time of the 1994 massacre, was invited to the committee to explain the decision-making process behind allowing

Goldstein to be buried in Kiryat Arba. Mofaz said the family and Kiryat Arba council had asked that Goldstein be buried in the Jewish cemetery in Hebron, but the IDF's opinion was that this could cause the security situation in the city to deteriorate and result in provocations. Mofaz said at the time the IDF was told the grave would be temporary and would later be moved elsewhere. Nobody planned a memorial which would act as a site for pilgrimages, he said.

PM's bureau chief quits

By DAVID MAKOVSKY

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's bureau chief David Agmon is leaving after only three months on the job, the Prime Minister's Office announced yesterday. Agmon is reportedly quitting because he feels under-utilized. There are also indications that he is disappointed that his role as keeper of the premier's schedule was not transformed into a policy-

related position linked to the peace process. "I am only using 20 percent of my talents, and I am sick of it," he reportedly said recently. Agmon was not available for comment. However, there have been signals that Agmon alienated Netanyahu's staff, including Director-General Avigdor Lieberman, by trying to push others out. For example, shortly after

assuming the position, Agmon sought to rearrange the office. He sought to move Netanyahu's military aide Ze'ev Livne out of his office adjacent to the premier and put him five floors above him. This angered Livne, and Lieberman was forced to intervene to cancel Agmon's move. Other key aides found their access to Netanyahu curtailed, leading the staff to complain directly to the premier about Agmon's actions. At one point,

Agmon physically blocked communications director David Berlan from entering a meeting with the premier, although subsequently relations between the two were said to improve. He also reportedly clashed repeatedly with Ruhama Avraham, Netanyahu's personal secretary and a Lieberman loyalist. Agmon also cancelled meetings the premier had scheduled with key American Jewish groups, saying he was unfamiliar with the

organizations. Agmon's role shrank with time. Neither a personal friend of Netanyahu's nor someone who was with him while he was in the opposition, he never made it into the premier's inner circle. Instead, Agmon's role became more clearly defined as scheduling, where he developed sensitivity, officials said, but became bored. Netanyahu, yesterday, praised Agmon and said he regretted his departure.

More Beduin removed from Ma'aleh Adumim

By HERB KEINON

Some 200 police and Border Police evacuated five Beduin families -- about 30 people -- from Ma'aleh Adumim yesterday, the second stage in the evacuation of the Jahalin tribe from the area. Three other families were evacuated from the site two weeks ago.

A total of some 200 people are to be moved, according to the Civil Administration. The evacuation began at 10 a.m. A number of Beduin from nearby encampments joined the families at the site, and the men put up -- for the most part -- only passive resistance.

At least one man was forcibly dragged down the hill and five people were reported injured. Belongings from the tin shacks where the families lived were loaded into a truck, and then the shacks were bulldozed down.

Lynda Brayer, who waged what turned out to be a fruitless court battle on behalf of the Jahalin, stood to the side and said, "I tell the families not to be depressed, that the only way the Israelis can do

this is through brute force. They don't have justice or right on their side."

One military source said that negotiations to quietly move the Beduin would have succeeded months ago, if not for the intervention of outside elements who he said were using the Jahalin as a telegraphic symbol to push their own political agenda.

The source said that the Palestinian Authority also became involved in the issue, and told the Jahalin not to peacefully agree to any compromise.

He said that most of the tribe has come to grips with the move to another site near Kedar, but are putting up token resistance to please the PA.

The Beduin say the proposed site near Kedar is inappropriate because of its proximity to Jerusalem's garbage dump. Udi Zerahiya, the head of the Bethlehem region office of the coordinator of activities in the territories, said the Beduin are being moved in stages in the hope that the next group will see that the Civil Administration is intent on carrying out a High Court decision to move the

tribe, and will move on its own.

Zerahiya said he is aware that from a public relations standpoint it would be wiser to move everyone at once, but that the hope is that by moving the Beduin in stages, a confrontation can be avoided.

The Jahalin fled the Negev in 1950, and settled in the Judean Desert, on the road to Jericho.

The land they were living on was declared state land in 1981.

In 1989, the Civil Administration began talking to them about an alternative site, and they were offered alternative sites in 1993.

The High Court of Justice upheld the Civil Administration's right to evict the tribe in May 1996, and rejected another appeal in September.

The Beduin were to have been moved by August, but various target dates for eviction were put off because of the fear that it would spark a conflagration.

Ma'aleh Adumim officials say that the tribe's various encampments are blocking the completion of a new neighborhood.

BACKGROUND

Jahalin Beduin find support from environmentalists

By JON IMMANUEL

The removal of Jahalin Beduin from land slated for Ma'aleh Adumim continued yesterday, as five more families were forcibly moved to a new site near Abu Dis two kilometers away. After 15 years of legal proceedings the High Court of Justice rejected the Jahalin's appeal against removal and empowered the Civil Administration to remove them from August 28 last year.

The removal of some 49 families on land slated for settlement was delayed until this month, because of the expected opposition it would arouse from Palestinians. It resumed two weeks ago as soon as the Hebron agreement was signed.

The new site is some 500 meters away from Jerusalem's largest garbage dump and therefore is unfit for human habitation, environmentalists say.

Sarah Kaminker, a former Jerusalem municipal town planner, identified with Meretz, says the Environment Ministry itself has rules which say "no human settlement should be put up closer than two kilometers from a garbage dump."

She adds that even if the site was environmentally sound, it ought to be terraced so the Beduin can put their tents on a flat surface. Rooms should be made for the sheep and goats from which Beduin make their living. "Half a dunam, a family is not enough."

Peter Lerner, spokesman for the Civil Administration, says the site is 800 meters from the garbage dump and is above a road traveled by hundreds of garbage trucks every day.

"But it is less affected than the Jewish settlement of Kedar, which is further away but more affected by the dump because of wind currents."

A water pipe reaches the site for central use, and electricity can be connected to individual homes, Lerner says, adding that this is more than they had in the past.

The half-dunam allotted per family is misleading because many families live in groups of three or more as several brothers and their wives live together and share their flocks, he says.

This means that a group of families may have two dunams or more and then there is room to make a pen for flocks.



Plainclothes policemen yesterday guard the entrance to the tunnel Wakf officials say goes under Al-Aksa Mosque. (Orian Resnik)

Gov't denies Wakf charges on new tunnel

By Jerusalem Post Staff

Government officials yesterday denied charges by the Islamic Wakf that Israel was digging under the Al-Aksa Mosque, following claims that new plastering had been found in a tunnel close to it.

PA Religious Affairs Minister Hassan Tahboub and Umm el-Fahm Mayor Sheikh

Raed Salah say the tunnel runs under Al-Aksa and that they have a video showing work there as affected the foundations of the mosque. Amir Drori, director-general of the Antiquities Authority, called the charges "lies without any foundation." Drori said there was no tunneling under the Temple Mount but that teams had plastered walls to strengthen a tunnel for tourist use that ran outside the Old City

walls. Tourism Minister Moshe Katsav dismissed the charges as baseless after checking with Jerusalem Police chief Arye Amit, Drori and Yoel Merinov, managing-director of the company to develop eastern Jerusalem. He relayed this Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, and they agreed notify the Wakf of this. Katsav also spoke with Salah about the issue.

Army bans Arab building in Hebron casbah

By JON IMMANUEL

The Hebron municipal council yesterday condemned an IDF decision to forbid Arab building in the casbah area and called an emergency meeting last night to confront what it called a serious violation of the Hebron agreement.

In a long order written in Hebrew and accompanied by photographs, OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan said that "in the area included in the photographs, you are forbidden to restore any rooms."

An IDF statement said that it includes "building that has already started next to the Jewish Quarter... The purpose is to prevent building that presents a danger to the Jewish settlement."

"This is very serious. It is a pure and fresh violation of the agreement. We condemn this declaration. It will return us to point zero," said council member Dr. Avni Zughayer.

SMOKING

Continued from Page 1

Mor Nissim entered the building on Torah M'zion street. Moran identified Falhi and said she was filling out a complaint against him. Falhi said he was on the phone as part of a live broadcast, so Moran patiently waited; he then went to Oren, who told the inspectors to leave the premises. They complained to Albert Alroi, the city official in-charge of inspection, and he in turn sent a complaint to Avni.

Yefet said that he has complained to his superiors at the Israel Broadcasting Authority, the health minister and other officials, but no one has managed to stop smoking in the studios. Due to his faxes to city officials, however, two of his colleagues recently were fined NIS 170 apiece for smoking at work.

Kol Yisrael spokeswoman Carmella Yisraeli said Oren had sent the inspectors away and ordered guards to keep them out in the future for security reasons.

TALKS

Continued from Page 1

and therefore was disappointed the elections were advanced, but he insisted that Syria was not to be blamed for the pace of the talks.

Mualem, who is also the Syrian ambassador to the US, said Damascus will not talk with the Netanyahu government unless it agrees in advance to fully withdraw from the Golan Heights.

When asked about negotiating with the Netanyahu government, Mualem responded, "If we are not certain that the end result of the negotiations will be a return of the Golan to the lines of 4 June 1967, there is no reason for us to go for talks."

Mualem said it would be insufficient for Israel to say it is committed to land for peace. "If ever we were to agree to return to the table without Netanyahu's commitment both to full withdrawal

and to honor the American-drafted paper on security arrangements, we would lose all we achieved in the negotiations."

Mualem claims that Peres, immediately upon ascension to the premiership, reiterated Yitzhak Rabin's commitment to fully withdraw from the Golan.

Speaking in Rehovot yesterday, Peres said he opposes such a withdrawal. "I am against the Syrians being on the Kinzeret. There are no June 4 borders. June 4 is a situation and not a map," he said.

According to Mualem, in July 1994, Rabin made an "agreement" to withdraw to the June 4 line.

It was disclosed months ago that Rabin verbally and conditionally told the US that Israel might completely withdraw from the Golan, but only if it was fully satisfied with security arrangements and normalization.

Hillel Kuttler contributed to this story.

SWISS

Continued from Page 1

"meaningful" -- possibly hundreds of millions of dollars.

Jewish Agency Chairman Abraham Burg, who had called for Jagmen's resignation, expressed satisfaction with the announcement and said that he had "saved the dignity of Swiss diplomacy. Anyone who tries to fight the Jewish nation will come up against the Jewish organizations and their leaders, who will fight back."

State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns said the envoys memo "betrays a fundamental lack of understanding about the commitment that the US government has to its own citizens and to the search for justice."

"It would be most unfortunate if these remarks and these leaks proved to be accurate," Burns said. "We hope that they were not accurate because any ambassador

in Washington who advocates waging a public relations campaign against American-Jewish groups and against Holocaust survivors is just wrong-headed.

"It's just not the right thing to do. It's not going to succeed with the American people."

Burns also lauded D'Amato's efforts on behalf of Holocaust survivors as "doing the Lord's work here" and said the administration supports those efforts meant to "get to the bottom of this question."

Batsheva Tsar and Hillel Kuttler contributed to this report.

With deep sorrow we announce the passing of our husband, father and grandfather

IAN COHEN

The funeral will take place today, Tuesday, January 28, 1997 at 12:30 at the new Ra'anana Cemetery.

Gertie, Michael, Stephen, Marian Enid and grandchildren

With deep sorrow we announce the tragic passing of our beloved

TONY WINTERS

The funeral will take place tomorrow, Wednesday 29 January, 1997, at 11.00 a.m. at the Herzliya cemetery

Sadly missed by his mother Letty and brother Neil Helen, Gidon, Zippi and Shimri family and friends in Israel and England

I deeply mourn the tragic and untimely loss of my very dear son-in-law

TONY WINTERS

Sybil

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and JDC-Israel extend heartfelt condolences to

Ilana Oliech on the loss of her father

BERT WEINBACH

May you be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem

Weiss, Ze'ev spar at committee meeting

By LIAT COLLINS

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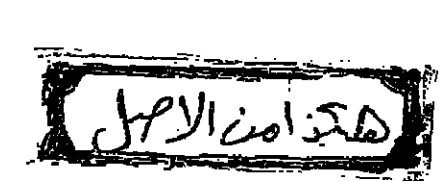
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דואר אל ארץ



Regional tourism moves forward
Visiting Turkish Tourism Minister Yucel Bahattin (left) and Tourism Minister Moshe Katsav exchange tourism cooperation agreements signed yesterday at the Jerusalem Sheraton Hotel. "Turkey is willing to assist in helping bring peace to the Middle East," Bahattin said. In talks yesterday, it was decided that the two countries will market joint tourism packages abroad. In 1996, 300,000 Israelis visited Turkey, while 14,000 Turks - a 22 percent increase over 1995 - came to Israel. (Issac Harari)

Ben-Porat warns against overspending

State comptroller says local authorities' debts caused by mismanagement

Many of the local authorities' deficits are due to overspending, and the government should prevent this by monitoring budgets more closely, State Comptroller Miriam Ben-Porat said in her report on the local authorities released yesterday.

Ben-Porat found that employees received payments in excess of what they deserved or what was specified in the budget and numerous violations of building regulations.

Ben-Porat's report noted that some of the violations had been pointed out in previous reports and criticized local councils for their "apathy" and "lack of motivation" to correct them.

The local authorities are responsible for their employees, she wrote. However, the report continued, the Interior Ministry has overall authority and it did not exercise it to the extent it should have. The ministry should have examined the budgets more closely.

The report also criticized the government for covering their debts, saying it was like awarding a "prize" that grew as councils' overspending worsened.

The report called on the Interior and Finance ministries to institute more effective methods to evaluate local councils' budget requests and monitor their spending.

Union of Local Authorities chairman Adi Eldar responded that their debts resulted from the unreasonable responsibilities that the government gave to the councils in sectors such as education, welfare, absorption and development.

He also said that the Finance and Interior ministries had approved payments to local council employees. (Iim)

New police appointments made

Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani and Police Inspector-General Assaf Hefetz decided yesterday to appoint Lt.-Cmdr. Yossi Sadbon as the next Judea and Samaria District police commander. Sadbon will be promoted to the rank of commander, replacing Cmdr. Alik Ron, who will become head of the Northern District.

Sadbon, 44, has served in the Israel Police since 1974. His positions have included legal adviser to the Israel Police and commander of the Dan region. Sadbon holds bachelor's and master's degrees in law.

Lt.-Cmdr. Yehuda Bechar was named head of police operations. Bechar also will assume the rank of commander, replacing Cmdr. Dani Brinker, who was named to the post of Southern District police chief.

Bechar, 48, has served for 20 years in the force and holds an IDF rank of lieutenant-colonel. His previous posts include deputy head of the intelligence branch. He holds a bachelor's degree in criminology and political science. (Iim)

NEWS

in brief

Two bank robberies in Haifa area

Two robbers held up a postal bank in the Givat Amos area of Neshet yesterday, and stole NIS 38,000 after hitting a woman clerk on the head with a bottle. They were later caught by police during a chase in which a helicopter was used.

The woman clerk was taken to hospital suffering from light injuries.

The police helicopter was back in action a short while later searching for a robber who held up the Mercantile Bank branch in Haifa's Hadar district and ran away with NIS 8,000 in cash. By last night the thief was still at large. David Rudge

Journalist Azaria Rapaport dies

Journalist, editor and broadcaster Azaria Rapaport, 73, died early yesterday morning. He is survived by his wife Ruth, and two daughters, one of whom, Tali, is married to Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak.

Rapaport's career included serving as the Jerusalem correspondent for Ha'aretz, ombudsman for Ma'ariv and broadcasting and editing for both TV and radio. He was among the founders of Israel Television. He also acted in both the theater and movies, his most famous role being in Hill 24 Doesn't Answer. Iim

Dudu Topaz questioned for drug use

Television entertainer Dudu Topaz was questioned yesterday on suspicion of drug use, after several grams of what is believed to be marijuana and a number of Ecstasy pills were found in his apartment and car.

Police were led to Topaz after launching an investigation into widespread drug use in the north Tel Aviv area. A barber, 30, was arrested, whose questioning led them to three other suspects from north Tel Aviv, one of them Topaz. Police then searched Topaz's apartment and questioned him and his girlfriend. The barber is still being held on suspicion of drug dealing. Iim

Haifa Chemicals workers continue protests

By DAVID RUDGE

Dozens of angry Haifa Chemicals workers demonstrated at offices being used temporarily by the troubled firm's management after negotiations broke down again.

The firm's management rented the offices so they could continue working after the employees declared a general strike and staged a sit-in at the factory.

Nearly 100 striking employees demonstrated at the temporary offices yesterday, disrupting management's work.

Police were called to the scene but did not interfere and the demonstration passed peacefully, despite some angry words by the workers.

"We would prefer management to come back to the factory and work there instead of wasting more money on renting premises elsewhere," said Haifa Chemicals workers committee chairman David Ravi.

"At the same time, we don't want them to feel too comfortable while we are all out of work and the factory itself is shut down. We will stage more demonstrations there," Ravi said.

The firm's management, meanwhile, is demanding that the workers honor and abide by an order of the National Labor Court banning them from continuing their sit-in at the factory.

The court ruled that only members of the workers committee could be allowed onto the premises to carry out committee business.

Management, however, claims that strikers, other than members of the workers committee, are still inside the factory and preventing access by management.

Ravi denied the allegations, maintaining that the workers' protest tent was pitched outside the compound near the entrance to the plant and that only committee members were inside.

The demonstration yesterday followed yet another breakdown in negotiations over a new collective labor agreement. Management insisted that it was prepared to negotiate a new collective agreement. However, Histadrut Haifa and district branch chairman Baruch Zaltz maintained that management's inflexibility over key

issues was inconsistent with its statements.

The firm is apparently still insisting on cutting the 500-strong work force by 120 employees in order to reduce costs and enable the company to compete profitably on overseas markets.

The Histadrut has proposed that 60 workers take early retirement and that discussions over more staff cuts should be conducted through arbitration. Management has so far rejected this idea.

Meanwhile the Histadrut's Haifa branch - with the backing of the national headquarters - is today due to submit a petition to the High Court of Justice against last week's National Labor Court decision annulling the previous collective labor agreement.

High Court petitioned on secular burial

By EVELYN GORDON

MK Dedi Zucker (Meretz) and former Meretz MK Benny Temkin yesterday petitioned the High Court of Justice against the Religious Affairs Ministry's failure to allocate land for non-religious burials.

In March 1996, the Knesset passed a law, sponsored by Zucker and Temkin, which required the ministry to allocate land for secular burials and promulgate regulations to govern such burials. This law was meant to solve the problem of Russian immigrants who are not halachically Jewish, as well as to provide an alternative for

people who simply do not want a religious burial.

In the 10 months since the law was passed, however, no such regulations have been promulgated and no land has been allocated, the petition said. The ministry has therefore effectively negated the law.

The petition noted that the law did not stipulate any deadlines for when these actions had to be taken. The accepted rules of legal interpretation, however, state that if no deadlines are set, the law must be implemented "with all due speed." Ten months with no action does not constitute "due speed," the petition said.

Dead boy's marrow may save sister

By JUDY SIEGEL

The two-year-old sister of Hilmi Shusha, the Palestinian boy allegedly killed by Nahum Korman, yesterday underwent a bone marrow transplant. The marrow used was taken from his hip after his death.

The transplant went well, according to her doctors at Hadassah-University Hospital in Jerusalem's Ein Kerem, and the prognosis for a full recovery is good, although it will take months to know for sure.

Suba Shusha suffers from Gaucher's disease, a genetic disorder that killed an older sibling but can be cured by a suitable bone-marrow transplant. Her brother was a perfect match for her, but Hilmi, 10, was shot and killed a few months ago. Korman, of Beitar Illit, maintained that the boy had thrown rocks at his car, but denied that he had beaten him up or otherwise caused his death.

Hilmi's parents, who live in nearby

Batir, said that Korman, who is to go on trial, had "not only killed our son, but also our daughter, because now she won't get a transplant."

Prof. Shimon Slaviv, head of the national bone marrow transplant unit, said that when the boy was admitted in critical condition, and they identified him as the planned donor, they realized they would have to remove bone marrow from his hip. The marrow was frozen and Suba was prepared for the procedure.

Weiss, Ze'evi spar at committee meeting

By LIAT COLLINS

Yesterday's meeting of the Knesset House Committee ended with a verbal confrontation between Shevah Weiss (Labor) and Molelet leader Rehavam Ze'evi, and the press being banned from future meetings.


Weiss walked out after the exchange, which arose over the discussions on the handling of plenum speeches in Arabic.

Ze'evi suggested that the time needed for interpretation into Hebrew be included in the time allowed for an MK and not added on. Today, after an MK addresses the plenum in Arabic, an interpreter takes the stand to translate. Ze'evi claimed this meant the Arab MKs get double the time for speeches.

Weiss was furious with the suggestion and explained it is a traditional procedure, at which point Ze'evi accused the Polish-born Weiss of having a "Diaspora mentality." Weiss responded: "You're a racist and a fascist" and walked out.

Weiss said it was the first time he had ever walked out of a Knesset meeting in 16 years in the House.

The committee did not reach a decision on the issue, and it was decided to ask Speaker Dan Tichol to give his opinion. The only decision taken was to ban the press from future committee meetings.



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Last date for submitting proposals: February 23, 1997, at 11 a.m.

Last date for submitting proposals: March 9, 1997, at 11 a.m.

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b. Participation in a tender is also subject to complying with the preliminary conditions detailed in the Tender Regulations 1993, Para. 6 (a) 1, 2, 3 (i.e., registration as required by law, compliance with mandatory specifications, and the holding of the permits required by law for public bodies).

c. If a bidder does not attach any particular document or permit, license or any other required material, as required by the preliminary conditions, the Electric Corporation may allow the bidder to submit the missing material, within a period of time to be set by the Corporation.

The tender documents may be obtained, Sunday - Thursday, at the Market Research and Tenders Dept., 11 Sderot Pal-Yam, Haifa, between 9 a.m. and 12 noon, on submission of a receipt, showing payment (non-returnable) of the cost of the documents, into the Corporation's account at the Postal Bank. Payment slips for making such payments are obtainable at the above address. Tel. 04-861-5456/4.

Before purchasing the tender documents, they may be reviewed on Sunday - Thursday, 9 a.m. - 12 noon, at the offices of the Market Research and Tenders Dept. at the above address, and at the Sales Unit, 90 Rehov Yigal Alon, Tel Aviv, Ashdod building, Entrance Gimmel, Floor 1, Tel. 03-565-4679, 03-565-4641.

Bids should be submitted in a sealed envelope, and be placed in Tenders Box No. 1 in the Pal-Yam building, Haifa (address as above) by the last date for submitting bids, as stated above.

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NOTE. In appropriate cases, the Electric Corporation will give preference to suppliers, in accordance with the Tender Regulations (Preference for Locally Produced Goods, and Obligation to Extend Commercial Cooperation). The Electric Corporation retains the right to negotiate, where this is legally permissible.

Chechens crowd polls in post-war election

By LAWRENCE SHEETS

GROZNY (Reuters) - Chechens flocked to vote yesterday for a new president they hope will secure their independence from Moscow, after two years of war which claimed tens of thousands of lives and destroyed their economy.

Turnout was so high among an electorate estimated at 517,000 that officials extended the closing time for voting by two hours to 10 p.m. to cope with the flow. An electoral officer told Reuters turnout by midday was 30 to 35 percent.

"We need an end to chaos and these elections will put us on the road to a better life," said Musa Sagalayev, 45, after casting his ballot at polling station number seven in the devastated capital Grozny.

Patient lines built up at polling stations early on a bright winter morning, from snow-clad villages in the Caucasus mountains to Soviet-era collective farms on the plain, in Grozny and at special centers where busloads of war refugees poured in from across the frontier.

Aslan Maskhadov, 45, who led a few thousand guerrilla fighters to a stunning victory over the demoralized Russian army last August, is widely regarded as the frontrunner.

All the main contenders in the 13-man field vow to turn the de facto independence won in the war into sovereignty. They include acting president Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev and guerrilla leader Shamil Basayev, who is wanted in Russia for "terrorism."

President Boris Yeltsin, who has admitted that sending troops to crush Chechen secession in 1994 was a mistake, agreed to elections as part of a face-saving peace deal.

The Kremlin would prefer Maskhadov and abhors Basayev but, in any case, flatly opposes independence for fear of unset-



Former Chechen guerrilla chief commander Aslan Maskhadov, one of 16 candidates for the five-year presidential term, salutes after voting outside Grozny yesterday. Maskhadov is believed to be the front runner in the race. (Reuters)

ting its southern frontier and fuelling other ethnic conflicts.

At Basayev's mountain stronghold of Vedeno, a center of resistance throughout the war, one hobbling village elder in a shaggy sheepskin hat entered the polling station with the Moslem war cry "Allahu Akbar!"

The wall was taken up by dozens of others on a street still scarred by ruined homes hit by Russian shells. Islam has been a

touchstone of rejection of Russian rule for two centuries.

Over 100 foreign observers are in Chechnya to monitor an election for the first time. Several observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) said they were impressed by the smoothness of the process.

Journalists saw some minor violations, such as family members voting on each other's behalf.

But there was little sign of intimidation and remarkably few guns in evidence for a region still awash with weaponry.

Casting his ballot at a old dairy collective farm 20 km from Grozny, Maskhadov predicted he would win 60 percent of the vote. He pledged to "bring order" to Chechnya as his first step and to develop normal ties with Russia.

"We need to develop normal ties so that we won't have to wage war anymore," said the grey-haired former Soviet artillery colonel, dressed in a traditional lambshwool hat. Many voters said Maskhadov had the best chance of securing peace.

Basayev, 32, who made his name with a bloody raid on a Russian town in 1995, forecast his own victory and said Russia would "collapse" if it did not accept Chechen independence.

Yeltsin cancels Dutch trip, renewing fears over health

By TIMOTHY HERITAGE

MOSCOW (Reuters) - President Boris Yeltsin cancelled plans to visit the Netherlands on doctor's orders yesterday, deepening concern about his health and raising new doubts about his ability to rule Russia.

A Kremlin spokesman said doctors had advised the 65-year-old president, who is recovering from pneumonia and has not been seen in public for three weeks, not to leave Moscow.

"Because of this, agreement has been reached with the government of the Netherlands and the chairman of the European Union to postpone the visit to the Netherlands," the spokesman said.

"It will take place in Moscow in the near future," he said, without giving any details.

Yeltsin had been due to meet Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok, whose country holds the European Union's rotating presidency, in The Hague on February 4. It would have been Yeltsin's first trip abroad since last April.

He was taken to a hospital with pneumonia of both lungs on January 8 and released 12 days later.

The Kremlin has announced no change to plans for Yeltsin to host French President Jacques Chirac at a residence outside Moscow on Sunday, one day after the Russian leader turns 66.

Yeltsin also is planning to go to the US in March for talks with President Bill Clinton, although final details have not yet been settled.

Yeltsin remained closeted in the Gorky-9 residence outside Moscow, three weeks after the last

new footage of him appeared on Russian television - showing him chairing a Kremlin meeting on January 6.

"He is dealing with the basic questions of state policy, both domestic and foreign," Interfax news agency quoted Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin as saying. "The president is returning to good form and will be in good form."

Presidential press secretary Sergei Yastrzhembsky also rallied behind Yeltsin.

"There is no reason for alarm over the president's health," he told Ekho Moskvy radio station.

But Yeltsin's failure to appear has deepened concern that he may not be up to running Russia and tackling its many problems. He had two heart attacks in 1995 and has spent most of the last seven months out of the Kremlin with health problems.

Alexander Lebed, one of his main political foes and a likely presidential challenger when Yeltsin's term ends, stepped up demands for changes to the constitution to make it easier to remove the powerful president.

"We have built an authoritarian power pyramid. As long as the president is at the top, the entire pyramid is moving and doing something. Now he has been still for half a year and everything has started crumbling," Lebed said.

"That is abnormal. The number of functions should be such that one person is capable of performing them. The president took everything in his hands and now this country is falling apart," Interfax news agency quoting him as saying in an interview to be published in the *Novaya Gazeta* newspaper.

Cyprus protesters halt British maneuvers

AKAMAS, Cyprus (AP) - Protesters yesterday prevented a British military exercise in the Akamas forest in northwestern Cyprus.

They said they blocked it on grounds that live-fire exercises could start fires and damage the area's sensitive environment.

Britain, which maintains two sovereign military bases on the island, has the right to hold war games in designated areas under the 1960 treaty which granted Cyprus independence.

The protesters appeared to succeed in preventing the exercise by spreading out into the forest, forcing 100 British soldiers to wait all day at the edge of the woods unable to start their four-day maneuvers.

Police arrested 12 protesters, and a police helicopter flew over

the forest to try and locate other demonstrators.

But George Perdiki, a spokesman for the Federation of Cyprus Environmental Associations, said that there were more protesters in the designated exercise area, without revealing how many.

"We have succeeded in our objective to prevent the exercise today and intend to continue our protest," he said shortly before nightfall.

The protest, in which some members of the Cyprus parliament took part, followed a largely symbolic unanimous vote last week urging the government to stop consenting to the exercises.

A 1996 World Bank study on development of the Akamas peninsula proposed declaring the forest a nature reserve, stressing the need to protect its environment. The forest has many plants unique to Cyprus and is one of the few areas in the Mediterranean where turtles nest.

Tibet urges drive to shatter Dalai Lama influence

BEIJING (Reuters) - China has issued a call to crack down on independence activities in the restive region of Tibet by exposing the exiled Dalai Lama as a "fake" religious leader and pushing ahead with a clean-up of monasteries.

"The splittist activities of the Dalai Lama clique are not only a major reason in damaging social stability but also are the biggest impediment to the development and reform of our region," the *Tibet Daily* quoted a senior regional party official as telling a meeting on legal work in the Himalayan region.

Regional deputy Communist Party secretary Gui Jinxiong told the meeting that officials should step up their work to eliminate the influence of the Dalai Lama in the Buddhist region, the newspaper reported in an edition available in Beijing yesterday.

Officials had gained many victories in their crackdown on crime and unrest in Tibet last year, but police needed to strike harder at those in the region who wanted independence, he said.

Guo stressed three main tasks for 1997 to ensure stability in the region, which has been

rocked by several anti-Chinese riots in recent years.

The first was to deepen criticism of the Dalai Lama, he said, referring to the region's exiled god-king who has won the Nobel Peace Prize for his peaceful campaign for more autonomy for his homeland but who is vilified by Beijing.

"[We must] thoroughly expose his pretence of being a 'religious leader' so that all the masses and monks and nuns in the region are clear that the Dalai is a political subversive and a religious sham," Guo was quoted as saying.

US report raps Germany over Scientologists

By THOMAS W. LIPPMAN

WASHINGTON - The State Department's annual survey of human rights conditions around the world will contain expanded, toughened language criticizing Germany for restrictions on the Church of Scientology and its members, administration officials said.

The report, to be issued tomorrow, will chastise Germany for what a senior administration official called "a campaign of harassment and intimidation" against the controversial church. He said the United States, seeking to protect religious freedom, has urged Germany through diplomatic channels "not to prosecute people

for wrong thinking" but has been rebuffed.

The German response is, "We won't change our policy, no matter what you say," a German diplomat here said. "You are a big country. You can afford to have militias and cults. We can't." He said Germany, with 80 million people in a Montana-size country and a unique sensitivity to the dangers of "extremism" because of its Nazi past, is obliged to limit activities of groups perceived as threats to national well-being.

The US-German disagreement over Scientology is a rare irritant

in America's generally excellent relations with a key European ally. Although both sides agree it is hardly a major source of friction, the issue has a high decibel level because of the involvement of high-profile Scientologists such as actor Tom Cruise.

The subject is emotional also because of charges by the Scientologists that Germany's treatment of them recalls the Nazis' persecution of the Jews - a charge guaranteed to infuriate and pain Germans.

(The Washington Post)

Sudan claims 300 Ethiopian soldiers killed

KHARTOUM (AP) - Sudan says it has killed more than 300 Ethiopian soldiers aiding rebels in their three-week offensive in southeastern Sudan, a newspaper reported yesterday.

The government also announced it has created a committee for mobilization, with sweeping powers to put down the rebellion in the south and east, which Sudan claims is backed by Ethiopia and Eritrea. Both countries deny the charge.

"Today, we're sending the message to all cowards that we shall fight until we attain victory," President Omar Bashir told government officials yesterday during a meeting held to discuss the rebellion.

"There is no place among us for any traitor, mercenary, or hypocrite who has sold his country for power and dollars. This aggression by neighboring countries is meant to bring this government to its knees," he said.

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A true unity policy

Labor MK Yossi Beilin and Likud MK Michael Eitan should pay no heed to the sniping against them -- from both sides -- for hammering out an approach towards Israel's impending final status talks with the Palestinians.

Regardless of the details of their agreement, they have set a positive and much-needed example of leadership through compromise. The gauntlet has been thrown to the top political echelon to follow in their footsteps.

The group of MKs from the coalition and the opposition, led by Beilin and Eitan, that worked to reach agreement came to a number of important points of consensus. Both sides proclaimed victory. Beilin announced that key Likud members had for the first time agreed to "a division of the Western Land of Israel" between Israel and the Palestinians. Eitan declared that it was "an historic day" for Israeli settlers, since Labor agreed in the document that no settlements should be uprooted in the final status agreement.

Other key points of agreement were that Israel should not return to the 1967 borders, that Jerusalem must remain unified and that the future Palestinian entity must be demilitarized.

Regardless of each side's attempt to "spin" public opinion on the document, its main significance lies in whether it spurs the forging of a similar consensus between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Labor party leaders Shimon Peres and Ehud Barak.

Since the reluctant but determined adoption of the Oslo Accords by a rightist, there has been much talk of the possibility of a national consensus within Israel. In fact, the first person to speak of such a consensus was the prime minister himself.

Netanyahu began his first speech as prime minister by saying, "The State of Israel is embarking on a new path today, a path of hope and of unity, a path of security and of peace. And the first and foremost peace we must make is peace at home, amongst ourselves." The connection between unity and peace is, arguably, central to Netanyahu's world view, as it is to the participants in the Beilin-Eitan exercise. It is not surprising that a government of the Right is stressing this connection, because the potential for consensus is its principle asset in comparison with a Left-leaning government taking a similar course.

The governments of Yitzhak Rabin and Peres would not doubt have preferred to have an Israeli consensus behind them, but they did not let its absence hold them back. The Oslo Accords passed the Knesset by a single vote. Although

the Hebron agreement was, in many ways, simply a restating and implementation of Oslo, it won the support of almost three-quarters of the Knesset.

Despite Netanyahu's renowned rhetorical gifts, he has been oddly tongue-tied when it comes to translating the structural consensus for peace into a sense that the government does indeed enjoy such broad national backing on these issues.

Despite his post-election promise to make the forging of an agreement with the top opposition echelon, along the lines of the Beilin-Eitan agreement, his highest priority, Netanyahu has not done so. This promise was not just a popular thing to say; it was in his political interest.

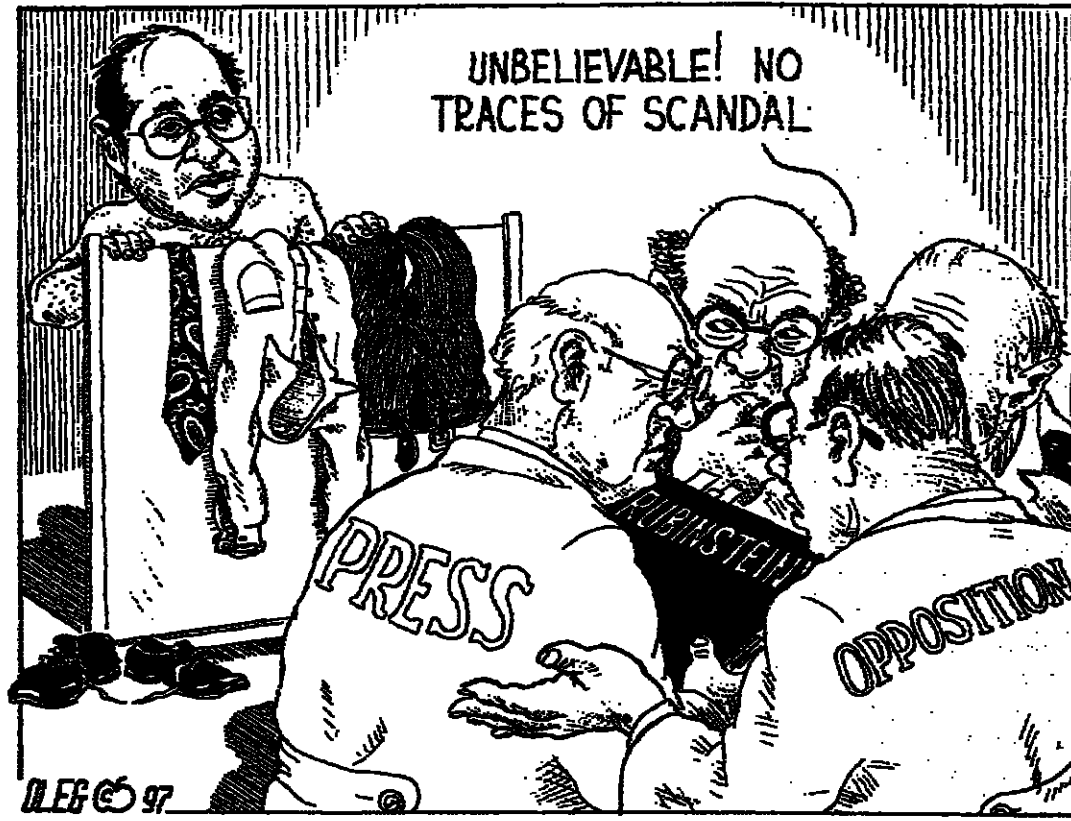
Nothing could strengthen the government's hand more in negotiations with the Palestinians than establishing agreed-upon red lines with the opposition. If such an agreement had been established from the outset, it is unlikely that the Arab world would have succeeded in isolating the new government so quickly, and Israel would today have been in a stronger position.

The government's initial headstrong, go-it-alone approach can be explained by the mistaken sense of power that new administrations have. Now that the hubris is beginning to wear off, the most likely explanation for delay in forging a national unity policy is the perceived dangers of a national unity government. More specifically, the question in Netanyahu's mind is no doubt whether Peres can be trusted to be a loyal participant in a unity government.

Following his defeat in the last elections, Peres has said that advancing the peace process is his only priority. Whether or not he regards it as synonymous with promoting peace, his equally high priority is personally returning to power, as seen in the deal he reached with his likely successor, Barak, which has Peres leading the party into a unity government if such a government is formed by late this year.

It is certainly possible that Peres has changed since he engineered what Yitzhak Rabin called the "stinking maneuver" in a failed attempt to topple the previous unity government in 1990. But Netanyahu might not be willing to take that risk. On the other hand, it is assumed that Peres would torpedo any attempt at a unity government that would leave him outside the government.

Peres may be facing his greatest test of statesmanship at this moment. If peace really is his main priority, the surest way to advance it is not to force the government to accept the baggage of a unity government along with the prize of a unity policy.



A vote for post-Zionism

In 1985, I made aliya from the US. Since that time, I have not voted in an American election.

Having decided to make my home in another country, I have never felt comfortable with the idea of helping decide the political fate of a nation I no longer live among.

Not surprisingly, the introduction by the Likud of a Knesset bill to allow Israeli citizens to cast an absentee ballot from abroad -- a privilege currently granted only to foreign diplomats and merchant seamen -- leaves me both astonished and outraged. Astonished that such a bill should come from the nationalist-Right side of the political spectrum, and outraged that what seems to be purely political considerations are behind a move with serious anti-Zionist ideological repercussions.

Proponents of the bill have pointed out that absentee ballots are now a feature of most "normal" Western countries, such as the US. True enough, but I'm a little confused here.

Is the Likud saying that we are now indeed a normal country, and not one which still has to make crucial security-related decisions which should be decided by those who have to live -- or die -- by their consequences? Have I missed something, or is the government now telling us that the "New Middle East" has actually arrived?

It is true that some Israelis currently residing abroad have every intention of coming back home after they finish the studies or work that took them out of the country. But what percentage of them make up the some 600,000 Israelis now residing abroad?

And how could one possibly distinguish between them, and the large majority of yordim who will never return here to serve in the army reserves or pay the taxes demanded of citizens here? Isn't the best test, in fact, simply

CALEV BEN-DAVID

requiring those living abroad to sacrifice at least the price of a plane ticket for the right to determine the country's future?

SOME OF the bill's backers offer very novel reasons for pushing it forward.

Likud MK Ruby Rivlin, who first proposed the bill, has said it will eliminate the inconvenience caused to those who have to post-

Allowing Israeli citizens to cast an absentee ballot from abroad can only cheapen the concept of aliya

pone vacations abroad because of summer elections.

God forbid a national election should spoil anyone's travel plans; by the way, that whooshing sound you hear is David Ben-Gurion and Menachem Begin spinning in their graves.

Molodet MK Benny Elon has also given his support on the thesis that right-wing Jewish votes abroad will help counter Israeli Arab votes at home.

If that's the case, why should Jews be bothered with the inconvenience of actually living in the Jewish state, if they can still decide its future?

It's clear that most of the bill's backers are supporting it simply out of a general belief that most of these absentee votes will go to the right-wing. As far as I know, there's no hard evidence that actually supports this notion.

Even if it is so, it's sad that a decision with such unfortunate ideological consequences should

be decided solely as a matter of political expediency.

The bill does have right-wing opponents in the Knesset (like Tsomet MK Pini Badash), as well as left-wing supporters like Jewish Agency Chairman Avraham Burg.

Burg, who once suggested appointing a Diaspora Jew to the cabinet, sees this bill as a way of tightening the ties between Diaspora Jewry -- a significant number of them now Israelis -- and the Jewish state.

Despite his sincere intentions, I think Burg is misguided on this issue. This bill represents much more of a "post-Zionist" gesture than any peace treaty with the Palestinians.

Yes, perhaps it will remove the usually exaggerated stigma of yerida -- but at the cost of seriously cheapening the concept of aliya.

In 1984, while studying in a yeshiva here, I shared a room with three Brooklyn boys who had made aliya the previous year. I was with them on the night of the election when Meir Kahane won his Knesset seat, with the help of their votes.

As much as I opposed their political views, I couldn't help admiring and envying the fact that they had put their money where their mouths were, by moving to Israel and having such an (albeit in my eyes unfortunate) impact on this country.

That night was one of the milestones along my own road to aliya.

I don't where those three guys are living now. If they're still here, I'll be happy to meet them at the ballot box in the year 2000.

But if they can cast those votes from Brooklyn, then their aliya -- and mine -- isn't worth much more than the paper our passports and I.D. cards are written on.

The writer is a member of The Jerusalem Post editorial staff.

Absent in body, here in soul

You'll find them spread out to the four corners of the earth, literally hundreds of thousands of them. They're academics, students, professionals, housewives, industrialists, tourists, fresh out-of-the-army thrill-seekers, taxi drivers.

They've got one thing in common: They're all Israelis, and MK Ruby Rivlin thinks they should have the right to vote in Israeli elections.

MK Yossi Beilin, on the other hand, talks about the "cynicism of the ostensibly national camp." He feels that the proposal "will allow former Israelis who abandoned us to send our children to the next war."

C'mon, Yossi. Isn't this a little hypocritical from the man who waves the banner of post-Zionist normalization? That line of thinking seems a bit parochial for a liberal mind like yours.

Even our most low-life expatriate isn't going to roll out of bed and race to the polls in order to send his family and friends back to Israel to war. Chances are, if he's truly abandoned the country he won't get out of bed to vote at all.

Furthermore, Israelis don't vote on whether or not to go to war. One likes to think that we're a peace-loving nation, that what distinguishes our left-wing camp from our right-wing camp is a difference of opinion on how to survive as a Jewish entity in a predominantly hostile Middle East.

And it should be noted that every time war has struck, throngs of Israelis living abroad have fought each other for a seat on the next plane back here. (No one has ever suggested taking away the voting rights of Israelis who fled the country at the threat of Saddam's Scuds. A low blow, an inexact parallel? Yes -- but food for thought.)

ELLEN W. HOROWITZ

But this isn't really a political issue; it's a civic one. And rather than concern ourselves with denying voting rights to those Israelis who permanently left the country years ago, we should concentrate our efforts on finding ways to allow the vote for the many loyal Israelis who, for whatever reason, find themselves outside the country on election day.

Why should a modern, vibrant, democratic state which exports its

human resources deny those people the right to vote in a national election?

There are thousands of scientists and business professionals representing Israel concerns all over the world, and thousands of professors and students at foreign universities. They haven't abandoned their country; why should they be penalized?

My husband is a perfect example: A true-blue, loyal Israeli, when he left the army he wanted to study acupuncture, a subject then unavailable in this country. He stayed away studying and interning for seven years, then returned -- with a wife and family in tow.

Let's face it, the age of the yored is dead. It's no longer anti-Zionist or treasonous to leave Israel for an extended period of time. We're

not the new-born, war-torn, food-rationing nation that people left for greener pastures 40 years ago.

Depending on the circumstances, an Israeli can often contribute as much to his country when he is abroad as when he is physically present within its borders.

Did you ever wonder why so few Israelis living abroad admit to having permanently left the country? Is it because of embarrassment or guilt? Probably not. I think it's because they never really left.

Once an Israeli, always an Israeli; those heartstrings keep playing "Hatikva." The intention to return one day is always there -- and many do.

But true expatriates do exist, nevertheless. And I have to admit that their having a say in my country's vital affairs disturbs me.

So I hope our MKs are bright enough to come up with the legislation needed to provide a creative solution to the problem, placing limitations where they are appropriate.

Is the bill "racist" (i.e. designed to increase the Jewish vote?) I think not -- unless Israeli Arabs living abroad find themselves barred from voting.

Rivlin claims his bill will be "good for the Right." Although there is a very vocal hawkish segment among Diaspora Jewry, I have my doubts over whether the Habadniks holding Israeli passports outweigh the Israeli professors and students from the left wing who are currently at American (and other) universities.

It remains to be seen if such a bill is "good for the Jews." But there is no question -- it's good for democracy.

The writer is a cartoonist and illustrator.

Supreme realist

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

The world has greeted the Hebron agreement with a triumphant "I told you so." The tone is patronizing, the praise ironic. Netanyahu, it seems, has belatedly found enlightenment, coming around finally to the wisdom of giving up land for peace, after endlessly swearing he would never do so.

As usual, this conventional view is wrong on the facts, and profoundly wrong in its understanding of Netanyahu.

The fact is that while Netanyahu deeply opposed the Oslo agreement, he repeatedly declared that if elected prime minister, he would carry out the accord's his country had solemnly pledged itself to. There is no more contradiction here than Ronald Reagan carrying out the Panama Canal treaties he originally had passionately opposed.

Netanyahu does believe, as do most Israelis, that Israel has a historic right to all of the Land of Israel. But he does not believe that historic right alone makes land in principle unrelinquishable.

His bedrock belief is that retaining much of the West Bank is essential to Israel's security, and that giving it up could be suicide. But that is fundamentally different from the religious-nationalist belief that giving it up is a sin.

Netanyahu made clear from the start that he would adhere to Oslo, trying to make the best of a fair bargain by (1) insisting on the Palestinians reciprocally carrying out their part of the bargain, and (2) holding out as much strategic territory on the West Bank as Oslo could possibly allow. The idea that one can oppose an agreement but feel bound as prime minister to carry out its essentials seems beyond most commentators.

THEY SEE Netanyahu's withdrawal from Hebron as some kind of ideological jujitsu performed

Netanyahu was dealt a hand. He played it.

either, as *Jerusalem Report* columnist Ze'ev Chafets argues, to gain "votes, power and a place in history," or as outright capitulation to US pressure.

It is neither, because there was no jujitsu. From the very beginning of Netanyahu's tenure as prime minister, there was never any doubt that he would withdraw from Hebron. The only question was when and under what conditions.

The when was decided by Arafat. To the immense frustration of the US mediators, he held up the agreement for months, holding out for further post-Hebron commitments.

He got some. Netanyahu officially committed his government to carry out another element of Oslo: three further withdrawals from parts of the West Bank.

The previous government was preparing to use these withdrawals to give Arafat most of the West Bank -- even before the beginning of "final status" negotiations, which would decide the fate of Jerusalem, water rights, refugees and the final borders between Israel and the Palestinian "entity."

It continues to amaze me that Labor could have designed a peace process in which it committed itself to giving away practically all its bargaining chips before the final, hardest, most critical negotiations even began.

Netanyahu was stuck with this framework. And he is carrying it out. But within it, he tried to minimize the damage by getting important US assurances...

With Hebron, he got its agreement that the extent of withdrawal would be exclusively up to Israel. He has made clear that he has no intention of giving up anywhere near what Labor was prepared to give up in these preliminary redeployments.

And he received a written commitment from the US secretary of state "to help ensure" that "both sides," including Arafat's, carry out outstanding commitments "on the basis of reciprocity."

Which means that if Arafat does not extradite terrorists, reduce his army to the limits permitted by Oslo and finally change the Palestinian charter, Netanyahu could stop his withdrawals and cite his US assurances as justification. Not the best deal in the world. But not bad.

With Hebron, Netanyahu has shown himself for what he is: a security hawk and a supreme realist. He was dealt a hand. He played it.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MEDIA BIAS

Sir, -- In the US both principle and tradition dictate that news broadcasts are reported and read in an objective manner and even the opinion shows have to present a fair balance of opposing views.

In stark contrast, Kol Yisrael, Army Radio, ITV and Channel 2 constantly twist, distort, manipulate and "color" news items to suit their "politically correct" worldview. It's easy to figure out the political viewpoint of Chaim Yavin, Shelly Yehimovitch, Arieh Golan and Meir Einstein (just to name a few) by their vocal tones, facial expressions and word choices when interviewing public officials and political activists. Far worse, they constantly argue with, interrupt and badger interviewees and represent right-of-center, religious and traditional Zionist principles. Notice how Benny Begin, Hanan Porat and Rafael Eitan have to struggle to complete nearly every sentence. Contrast this to the kid-glove treatment that Yossi Beilin, Shimon Peres and Yossi Sarid enjoy on the air.

Razi Barkai has just been appointed to host the TV show *Media File*. When the results of the May elections were announced, this same Razi Barkai commented on a live telecast that the results prove how stupid the Israeli electorate can be. And now he has been appointed guardian of Israel media fairness! On second thought, it's probably this attitude that won him the new job.

Anyone who has the nerve to criticize the bias and blatant unfairness of the Israeli media establishment is immediately branded an enemy of "free speech." The newscasters, talk-show hosts and editors seem to have *carte blanche* to feed us their vision of Israel, but I am denied the right to receive fair and objective news reporting on the state-owned media which I pay for via the TV license fee and the government budget. Don't we citizens deserve better?

MYRNA BENNETT
 Haifa.

TERRORISM ON THE ROADS

Sir, -- When a terrorist attack occurs, the story makes the front page. What about the terrorism on our roads? Each week people are killed on our roads, but apparently it is not so important because the report usually takes a backseat to other news. A short piece appeared on page 18 (out of 20) of the weekend edition of January 10. It mentioned the death of two people in road accidents the previous day and added: "Since the beginning of the week, 12 people have been killed on the roads."

How about more coverage of the victims and their families? Perhaps running human-interest stories on each victim, whether killed or seriously injured, will shock more drivers and pedestrians into acting more responsibly on the roads.

We have enough enemies from without. We need no more enemies from within.

ADINA HERSHBERG
 Jerusalem.

BASELESS HATRED

Sir, -- Rene Weil (Letters, January 15) says "directly or not" the declaration by some rabbis that soldiers should refuse orders to vacate parts of the Land of Israel brought about the shooting of Palestinians in Hebron.

The soldier who did the shooting has spoken at some length about his motives. They range from avenging the terrorist murder of his best friend to stopping the peace process. He was expelled from a leading religious school because of his claimed mystical visions and attitudes. Nothing he has said and nothing in the public record even remotely relates his action to the rabbinic advice Weil cites. That linkage is purely Weil's construction.

He is provoking *sinat hinam*, the baseless hatred to which some authorities attribute the destruction of the Second Temple.

The Yom Kippur service reminds us of the evil of baseless hatred; that evil should be confronted whenever it arises.

FRANCINE FIERSTEIN
 Jerusalem.

COMPENSATION SETTLEMENT

Sir, -- What amazes me about the Hebron negotiations is that no one has brought up the recent agreement between Germany and the Czech Republic.

It is common knowledge that at the conclusion of World War II the Czech Republic threw out 2,500,000 German-speakers from the Sudetenland. They have never returned nor have they received compensation nor recovered their worldly goods. Recently, the Germans and the Czechs signed an agreement which in essence recognizes that the Germans were thrown out by the Czechs for which the Czechs are sorry, and that the Germans acknowledge they were pro-German (Nazi) and therefore enemies of the Czech Democratic Republic. Both sides recognize their responsibility for what happened but agree the Germans will receive neither compensation nor apology. A compensation fund is to be set up by the Germans and the Czechs, 3/4 of it German money and 1/4 Czech money, and is to be used to compensate the Czechs in the Czech Republic for the suffering they endured because of the Germans. It seems to me that this can serve as a good example for a settlement with the Arabs. The rejected the UN partition decision, they were and are the enemy in our midst, they deserve to be thrown out. The Arabs have no claims.

MURRAY S. GREENFIELD
 Tel Aviv.

WRONG

Sir, -- With all due respect to Leah Rabin's great tragedy, I must say that this lady stops at nothing. How can she suggest to our present prime minister to ask Yitzhak for forgiveness for the mess the former government put him into? I think it should be exactly the other way round.

We are a democratic country and thus committed to former messy commitments. What option did Mr. Netanyahu have?

BRIGITTE NENNER
 Jerusalem.

Handwritten signature in Hebrew: אוריאל

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

The Jerusalem Post Tuesday, January 28, 1997

From hell to arson: Protests greet Kielce film

By TOM TUGEND in Los Angeles

A film dramatizing a 1946 pogrom in Poland has gained international attention after the Berlin studios of the film's German-Jewish producer were largely destroyed by what police describe as arson.

The film, *From Hell to Hell*, premiered in Los Angeles two weeks ago in an open screening at the Simon Wiesenthal Center and at a press conference at the German Consulate.

Almost immediately after the public presentation, the Wiesenthal Center received scores of e-mail and phone protests, many from the Chicago area, by Polish-American organizations and individuals, charging that the movie defamed Poland and its people.

The protests went unnoticed in the US but were widely reported in the German media. The German press went all out after filmmaker Artur Brauner returned to Berlin early last week to find large parts of his studios burned to the ground, with damage estimated in the millions of dollars.

Brauner himself and the Wiesenthal Center have been at pains to squelch German press conjectures of a link between the protests and the arson.

From Hell to Hell was inspired by the infamous pogrom on July 4, 1946, in the Polish town of Kielce, most of whose 25,000 Jews had been killed by the Nazis.

After the war, some 200 survivors returned to Kielce and tried to reestablish their community. They were met with growing hostility until a mob, enraged by Polish nationalists and some Communists, went on a rampage. In their wake, they left 42 murdered Jews and 52 injured.

As word of the massacre spread, about 100,000 Jews left Poland en masse.

Only last year, the Polish prime minister formally apologized to the Jewish people for the Kielce pogrom.

Nevertheless, the 50-year-old tragedy still seems to hit a sensitive nerve among Polish-Americans. Among the protest letters to the Wiesenthal Center was one by Deana Alvi, who identified herself as the chairwoman of the Polish-American Public Relations Committee.

Its purpose, said Alvi in a phone interview, is "to respond to anti-Polish statements, coming mainly from Jewish organizations, the Jewish press, and the Wiesenthal Center."

While she acknowledged that "a tragic incident, which is still under investigation," occurred in Kielce, she bitterly denounced the film, which she had viewed at the Wiesenthal Center, as "offensive, inaccurate and utterly stupid."

Alvi stated that her family had sheltered five Jews in Warsaw during the war, "while American Jews did nothing to help East European Jews."

She said she had not heard of the torching and that "that's not the way to solve problems." But she exhorted Jews to realize that "their behavior has not been exemplary, otherwise they would not have been expelled from every European country."

Brauner, 79 and himself a Polish-born Holocaust survivor, who moved to Berlin in 1946, said he had intended to make *From Hell to Hell* for the last 50 years.

He was delayed, he said at a press conference, partly for lack of backing from German film support agencies. *From Hell to Hell* is a joint German/Belarus production, shot under a Russian director and with a mostly Russian cast. It has been submitted as the official entry of Belarus in the Oscar race for best foreign film.



After the Holocaust, a survivor (right) tries to reclaim her daughter from the Polish couple who adopted her in a scene from the film 'From Hell to Hell.'

DANCE ROUNDUP

Dancing without direction

By ORA BRAFMAN

Tamara Mielnik, artistic director of the only Jerusalem-based dance company, celebrated the company's 10th anniversary with six choreographic works vastly different from each other. On a rare visit to Tel Aviv, Mielnik missed a chance to present her company's artistic direction - if there is any.

The evening's program zigzagged from neo-classical ballet, through contemporary, back to jazz and modern dance.



Galina Panov and Bill Loutcher prepare for the Jerusalem Dance Theater's anniversary gala.

The Jerusalem Dance Theater, 10th Anniversary Gala. Guest dancers: Galina Panov, William Loutcher. *Creation of the world* - Ya'akov Lipshitz; *He hath made me laugh* - Tamara Mielnik; *Remember Me* - Valery Panov; *War and Peace* - Valery Panov; *Obsession* - William Loutcher (based on dance by Lester Horton); *Congo Tango Palace* - Talley Beatty. January 15 at Suzanne Dellal Center in Tel Aviv.

Accordingly, the musical choices ranged from Miles Davis to Tchaikovsky, from Purcell to Petrov. And she recruited Galina and Valery Panov and dancer/choreographer Bill Loutcher.

Of the company's eight dancers, six are from the former USSR. Mielnik herself is schooled mainly in modern dance. Since Mielnik is a modernist and most of these dancers are classically trained, when she presents the American choreographer Talley

The only real impact happened with Loutcher dancing his *Obsession*. As an old black preacher who kills his love (Galina Panov) with his copy of the Old Testament, he was most convincing, though she was wrong for the part. A pity, since Galina has still a lot to give with the right direction.

Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company. Choreographers: Uri Yngi, Avi Kaizer, Jens Ostberg. January 5 at Suzanne Dellal Center in Tel Aviv.

THIS WAS the first evening under the directorship of Rami Be'er, who will need a fair amount of wisdom to choose better choreographers in the future.

The program of the Kibbutz Dance Company contained three new works. None of the pieces were complete flops, yet neither were they investigating.

The most interesting work among them was *Lieber R* by Avi Kaizer. It starts with a dancer (Sivan Cohen) dressed in deep burgundy velvet, who arbitrarily spreads glaring white sheets of paper all over the black stage, yet with the intensity of a ritual. The work is supported well by the reciting of Rainer Maria Rilke's poetry and the music of Richard Strauss.

Kaizer, who danced as well, managed to build enigmatic tension around minimalist means. The repetitious phrases gave it strength in the beginning but didn't suffice to sustain it till the end.

played in a much more poetic and tender way than one might have anticipated. It was an exciting reading which on the one hand concentrated merely on the music and the music making, yet at the very same time built a towering programmatic picture which told many minute stories in an engaging manner.

In short, a performance that is not heard too often, a performance much more mature and intriguing than his own version of the same opus two years ago.

A day later, with the Israel Camerata Jerusalem, Korsantiya performed Mozart's Ninth Piano Concerto (K.271) and surpassed all the heights he himself set the previous evening.

The contrast between the death aura of the middle movement in which one senses the depth of musical expression and the buoyant outer movements full with joy de vivre was mastery.

It was a great reading of a great work by a great pianist whom we should hear more and more and more.

Tel Aviv Museum, January 20. Michael Aizenstadt

IN TUNE

It's a Dogg's life



Snoop Doggy Dogg enjoys the fruits of his success

By DAVID BRINN

Reminiscent of the days when The Beatles and The Rolling Stones would compete head on, the three superstars of rap have all released new discs almost simultaneously.

Beyond the homophobic, anti-semitic, misogynist and violent attitudes found in rap, we should remember that this is the most popular music in the US and seemingly undamaged by the slump in the music industry.

THE DON KILLUMINATI - THE 7 DAY THEORY
Makaveli (2 Fac)

DR. DRE PRESENTS - THE AFTERMATH
Dr Dre

THE DOGGFATHER
Snoop Doggy Dogg (Red Antz)

I know this because Dogg's and 2 Pac's discs begin with simulated newscasts bragging of their respective outlaw exploits.

All three discs have something to offer musically, but they are mostly one chord, rhythm-crazy rapping rhymes with enough expletives to fully earn their Parental Advisory sticker on their labels.

Dogg's laconic style wins some extra points because it keeps your interest wondering whether he's going to nod off in mid-rap.

Rap aficionados will easily identify subtle and not-so-subtle differences between these artists and songs, but for the average rock fan, it's just one long rap.

It makes sense that each generation will discover its own music, and rap is sweet revenge for all the parents of rock 'n' roll kids who yelled at us to turn it down. But rock 'n' roll rarely condoned hatred and violence.

The hard truth is that these artists reflect the lives of a huge number of people. And that's what makes rap one of the more vital musical forms today. At the sake of sounding like Tipper Gore, society needs to take a long look at how it got to this point.

TOWER RECORDS' TOP 15

| THIS LAST WEEKS ON | WEEK | CHARTS | ARTIST | TITLE |
|--------------------|------|--------|-----------------|---------------------|
| #1 | 1 | 11 | OST | EVITA |
| #2 | 7 | 10 | VIA | SPIRIT OF THE WORLD |
| #3 | 4 | 11 | SPICE GIRLS | SPICE |
| #4 | 2 | 7 | NO DOUBT | TRAGIC KINGDOM |
| #5 | 6 | 25 | RAMI KLEINSTEIN | COLLECTION |
| #6 | 10 | 10 | TONI BRAXTON | SECRETS |
| #7 | 14 | 2 | MIKA KARNI | COLLECTION |
| #8 | 8 | 4 | RITA | OLDER |
| #9 | 11 | 38 | GEORGE MICHAEL | SONG REVIEW |
| #10 | 15 | 4 | STEVIE WONDER | OD MEAT |
| #11 | 3 | 2 | EHUD BANAI | TRAVELING |
| #12 | 18 | 8 | JAMIROQUAI | FRIENDS OF BENNY |
| #13 | NEW | 1 | VIA | LE ROI EST MORT |
| #14 | 9 | 9 | ENIGMA | GESHEM ACHARON |
| #15 | 25 | 4 | VIA | |

Tower Records' top-selling albums for last week

Book your seat for Dumas & Eliot

By HELEN KAYE

Drama students are a similar breed wherever they are," says David Bridel, an unfairly handsome, blue-eyed, 27-year-old director from the UK. "Few have a huge desire to master all aspects of their craft. On the other hand, they're talented and love their work. Both here and in the UK they're swamped in theater."

Bridel first came in the summer to rehearse *The Tower* by Alexandre Dumas (senior) with the third-year students of the Ramat Gan Beit Zvi Drama School. Now he's back, polishing Helen Edmondson's 1994 adaptation of George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*.

The two shows are running back to back, and eight of the students are in both. The Dumas is on the mainstage through February 16 and *The Mill on the Floss* is on at the intimate Hangar space from tonight through February 25.

The students adore him. "He has that English patience," says one. "He's fun," says another. "He's young," says a third, heartfelt. Bridel has only to clack the clapper sticks he uses to get their lively and fascinated attention.

The Tower is a super-gothic horror story set in 14th-century Paris, dripping with blood and lust, as it slavers over a tale of orgies, serial murder and illicit passion. *The Mill on the Floss* is set in Victorian England and tells the story of Maggie Tolleriv whose wings melt when she flies in the face of convention. "I'm very comfortable with period material," says Bridel

during a rehearsal break, "and I love both these plays. *Tower* is a full-blown melodrama and that kind of language is bewitching and theatrical. Real melodrama, the unequivocal confrontation of good and evil, doesn't really exist today. The Hollywood blockbuster movies come closest, like *Independence Day*."

The Mill on the Floss "wears its heart on its sleeve, and the reason it still rings bells [among audiences] is because people can identify with Maggie's struggle to make something of her life."

Both shows required very different acting styles which Bridel handles with aplomb. Despite his movie-star good looks, he never even considered an acting career. Armed with a master's degree from Hull University, he teaches, directs and writes. "and I enjoy juggling them around." In the past four years he has worked at acting schools and universities in the UK, the US, Italy, Slovakia and now here. His own shows, like the '91 *Carnival Street*, won third place at that year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

His latest play, a drama of conflicting cultural mores called *Shreds and Patches*, was accepted to the 1995 London New Play Festival. When Bridel goes home to London, it will be to direct Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Elektra*, a dramatization of Richard Strauss's opera, at the Bridge drama school where he teaches acting, movement, clowning, masks and melodrama.

He would like to have his own theater school, but "I'm quite happy with the journey so far."

book department

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BUSINESS

in brief

Meridor: Preserve capital's aid status

Finance Minister Dan Meridor said yesterday he will oppose ministerial attempts to hamper Jerusalem's status in the Capital Investment Aid Law.

Currently factories in the capital are receiving the highest priority grants, but this week a ministerial committee recommended this end. Mayor Ehud Olmert welcomed Meridor's intervention and the ministerial decision to grant an additional NIS 130 million in infrastructure aid to eastern Jerusalem.

David Harris

Swanson, Kol Hamefarsim now partners

Kol Hamefarsim Ltd., a Tel Aviv-based advertising and marketing consulting firm, has announced a partnership agreement with New York public relations firm Swanson Communications, Inc.

Through the agreement, Swanson will service Israeli companies that are publicly traded or intending to go public on Wall Street.

Jennifer Friedman

Checks bouncing higher and higher

The number of bounced checks has increased by about 7% a year over the past four years, Deputy Supervisor of Banks Yitzhak Tal told the Knesset Economics Committee yesterday. He said the rise is mainly due to increased economic activity.

Part of the problem is also that the banks do not have clear criteria for how much of an overdraft to permit, he said, adding that there should be firmer rules, which would prevent customer confusion.

Committee chairman Elie Goldschmidt (Labor) said that some 230,000 checks, worth a total of about NIS 1.7 billion, bounced in 1996.

Goldschmidt said this was partly because 70% of Israeli families have an overdraft, and blamed the banks for encouraging overdrafts because of the high interest rates they can charge on them.

Evelyn Gordon

Seniors keep discount transport fares

Public transport discounts for senior citizens will not be abolished, Transport Minister Yitzhak Levy promised on Sunday night.

Levy signed an order ensuring discounts on all tickets remain as they were prior to the passing of the 1997 budget. The order, also signed yesterday by Finance Minister Dan Meridor, will come into effect on February 1.

David Harris

More talks on structural change

The government's discussion of the Treasury blueprint for structural changes in the economy is scheduled to conclude tomorrow morning.

During the first meeting, some two-thirds of the 25 proposals were approved, but there was insufficient time to consider the remainder.

The reforms are aimed at deregulating industry, breaking up monopolies, and improving efficiency, particularly in the public sector.

David Harris

Bezeq borrowing \$100 million

Bezeq is to borrow \$100m. without guarantees through a consortium of international banks led by the Union Bank of Switzerland, German-based Dresdner Bank, and Fuji Bank of Japan.

The loan contract, for a period of seven years, will be signed in March. This latest arrangement is part of an ongoing program to finance technological improvements, and for the provision of new products and services, said Bezeq director-general Yoram Turbowicz.

David Harris

Merger of Bezeq subsidiaries approved

Among the decisions taken during yesterday's meeting of the Ministerial Committee on the Economy were approval of the merger of two of Bezeq's subsidiary companies - Bezeq Bit and Bezeq Kol.

Approval of the payment of only one general toll for sail boats at the Port of Eilat - \$3.50 a meter - rather than the existing structure of four separate tolls; approval of the Airports Authority's 1997 budget of NIS 177.2 million; and approval of the second stage of opening the food industry to foreign imports.

David Harris

CVS, Revco confirm merger talks

CVS Corp. and Revco D.S. Inc. said yesterday they were discussing a merger between the two drugstore giants.

The companies did not elaborate on any potential terms and warned the deal might not come to fruition.

Revco, the second largest US drugstore chain, and No. 5 CVS said neither would comment further until a deal is reached or the talks are terminated.

Reuter

Central bank cuts interest rates by 0.5%

Bankers: Tight monetary policy has spent itself

By DAVID HARRIS & GALIT LIPKIS BECK

The Bank of Israel announced yesterday it will cut its key lending rate for February by 50 basis points, to 14.2 percent, thus completing an aggregate 2.8% cut since August.

Since its 1996 peak of 17% at the start of July, the bank has reduced the rate by less than a month.

The decision was taken in light of the current positive monetary policy, according to a statement from the bank.

The central bank said this has led to the ongoing decline in inflation, and the expectation of further reductions in the coming months. While inflation was running at a 15% annual rate in mid-1996, the year ended with 10.6% inflation, with the annual rate down to some 7% over the last six months of the year.

Other factors also taken into consideration in making the decision included the continuing slowdown in economic activity, and the continuing rise of the key M1 indicator of money - ending the year at 12.3%, according to the bank.

Despite some of the positive indicators, the

bank is urging continued caution and says this must be applied to the country's monetary policy.

Now that the government has successfully passed its 1997 budget, including NIS 7.2 billion in cuts, achieving its budget deficit target of 2.8% of the gross domestic product, the bank said it is vital for the budget to be carefully monitored, to prevent possible deviations from the desired targets.

It is vital to attain the budget goals for 1997 and future years, in order to reduce the balance of payments deficit.

Tel Aviv shares rallied ahead of the 4:30 p.m. announcement. The Mishtanim Index closed up 2.15% at 236.9, and the Maof top 25 shares ended the day at 245.62, a 2.18% rise.

In currency trading, the shekel lost 0.182% of its value against the dollar, which closed the day at a record high - NIS 3.3060, and depreciated 0.019% against the basket of currencies, which ended trading on NIS 3.6247.

The Bank of Israel's monetary policy has exhausted itself and can no longer achieve its targets, Bank Hapolim chairman of the board Amiram Sivan said, hours before yesterday's

announcement.

Emphasizing that the inflation rate has remained virtually unchanged during the last three years, Sivan said reduction of the rate can only be achieved at a high cost. "We pay a price in exports and activity," he said.

Most sectors in the economy are not suffering from a slowdown despite reports that the economy is on the verge of a recession, said Sivan.

The slowdown has mainly hit the tourism, clothing and food fields, while the communications, high tech, and software industries are continuing to grow he said. In the real estate field, Sivan said there is a growth in demand for housing, with the exception of the luxury housing market.

"In general, we are experiencing a more moderate growth in activity that what we were accustomed to in previous months," said Sivan.

Manufacturers Association president Dan Propper described the bank's tight monetary policy as "bankrupt," and called on the prime minister to enforce a balance between fiscal and monetary policy.

Elscint wins tender in Jordan

By JENNIFER FRIEDLIN

Elscint Ltd. has won a tender to sell a \$1.5 million magnetic resonance imaging system to the Jordanian government, becoming the first Israeli company to sell a major piece of high-tech equipment there, the firm announced yesterday.

The MRI system will be installed in Amman's Al-Basheer Hospital.

The Haifa-based company, which develops and manufactures a host of nuclear medicine imaging, medical ultrasound, mammography and computerized tomography systems, beat out Toshiba, Philips, Siemens and GE for the tender.

While Jordan's MRI market is relatively small, company representatives said that the ramifications of winning the bid extend beyond financial considerations.

"There are two aspects to the deal," said Yuval Yanai, Elscint's CFO.

"There's the commercial one for Elscint, and since we are all Zionists there is also the hope that this will help other Israeli companies to sell in Jordan, which has never before purchased a significant piece of high-tech equipment from Israel."

Yanai also said that the sale of the company's top-of-the-line Prestige MRI system, which has research and development applications as well as clinical ones, also could lead to greater collaboration between Israeli and Jordanian doctors and hospitals.

Yanai said that Elscint's sales for 1996 are expected to total \$310m., while projections for 1997 indicate a decrease in profitability margins due to increased international competition. Elscint has been growing at an annual rate of 10%-20%.

Bezeq: Gov't won't cover PA debts

By JUDY SEGEL

The government refuses to transfer money owed to the Palestinian Authority for the coverage of PA debts to Bezeq, the telecommunications company stated yesterday.

The Communications Ministry has repeatedly told Bezeq that it may not disconnect the PA from the telephone system in Israel or the outside world, Bezeq said, adding that there was "no other efficient way to collect the PA's debts."

Bezeq director-general Yitzhak Kaul said that "out of consideration for the needs of the state," the company assented to government requests not to disconnect the autonomous areas from Israeli phone links.

This is "vital" that an agreement signed by the Treasury and Bezeq six months ago - that sets down the mechanism for deducting funds owed to the PA and transferring them to Bezeq to cover the Palestinians' debts - be carried out.

The PA owes Bezeq NIS 45.4 million, according to Kaul.

The Finance Ministry says the PA's debts to Bezeq are not state debts and thus deductions from royalties may not be made; any reductions will have to be repaid, plus interest and linkage.



Protesting Thai farmers

Impoverished Thai farmers camp outside Government House during a protest in Bangkok yesterday. Poor northeastern Thais, equipped with food and camping gear, streamed into the capital on buses, trucks and trains and have declared they will not leave until their demands for social justice are met.

(Reuters)

Trade deficit increases 4% in '96

By DAVID HARRIS

Israel's 1996 trade deficit, excluding the diamond sector, totaled \$9.3 billion - 3.9 percent higher than in 1995, the Central Bureau of Statistics announced this week.

The deficit with the US, also excluding diamonds, rose 35% last year.

Imports last year reached \$24.9b. (excluding diamonds and trade with the Palestinian Authority), 5% higher than in

1995. Exports totaled \$14.2b., up 6%.

The largest share of the deficit was with the European Union, some 72% (\$6.7b.) of the overall figure. The remainder comprised 21% (\$2b.) with the US, 9% (\$800m.) with Asia, and 12% with the EFTA and other countries. The \$1.3b. trade surplus with the PA offset 14% of the total deficit.

The deficit with the US increased \$500m. or 35% over last year, and by \$140m. or 28% with Japan. However, the deficit with

other countries in Asia, especially Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan decreased, as did the deficit with the EFTA countries, down by \$50m. (6%).

When diamonds are included in the statistics, Israel registered a \$300m. surplus with the US, down \$200m. from 1995. There was also a \$110m. surplus in trade with Japan in 1996, compared with \$400m. the previous year.

Half of all imports originated in the EU, a quarter in the US, with 37% of exports going to the EU.

and 27% to the US.

Exports to Asia increased 13%, with significant rises being recorded with South Korea, Thailand and Taiwan. Exports to Japan, excluding diamonds, were similar in volume to those in 1995.

Diamond exports totaled \$4.9b., a 6.6% rise from 1995. Of these, 39% were sent to the US, 35% to Asia (mainly Hong Kong, Japan and Thailand), and 21% to the EU (particularly Belgium). Diamond imports stood at \$4.8b., an 8.7% increase from the previous year.

Sivan: Let mortgage banks sell insurance

By GALIT LIPKIS BECK

Bank Hapoalim will lobby against Supervisor of Insurance Doron Shorrer's refusal to grant its mortgage subsidiary, Mishkan Bank, a permit to operate an insurance agency, Amiram Sivan, chairman of the board at Bank Hapoalim, said yesterday.

During the last few years the commercial banks have tried to

increase their involvement in the insurance business as part of their plan to expand into new areas. But the insurance companies and insurance agents who already compete in an intense market oppose the banks' entrance into the industry.

Shorrer's objection to the mortgage banks' operation in the field is based on the fact that insurance agencies are defined as non-banking activities. According to Bank (Licensing) Law, aimed at reshaping the banks' activities so they will be less involved in non-banking operations, banks' non-financial holdings are limited to a maximum of 25 percent in each firm.

Hinting that the Treasury is not standing by its word, Sivan said, "When it was decided to reduce banks holdings in non-financial assets [as part of the Brodet Report] it was also decided to simultaneously allow them to enter the financial field."

Mishkan applied to the Supervisor of Insurance several months ago. Several of the other banks, such as Leumi Mortgage Bank and Tefahot Israel Mortgage Bank already hold licenses to sell

property insurance policies, which were granted to them in the past. Banking sources said it will be very difficult for Shorrer to legally cancel these permits.

In contrast to Shorrer, Supervisor of Banks Ze'ev Abeles is in favor of mortgage banks operating in at least some areas of the insurance industry, such as life insurance and property insurance policies to mortgage holders, a Bank of Israel spokesperson said.

At a news conference yesterday, Bank Hapoalim announced it has established 25 private banking divisions in its branches throughout the country.

The bank's emphasis on private banking is part of its reorganization plan for the year 2000 which will eventually divide its customers into four divisions: households, general, private banking, business, and conglomerates.

This year the bank intends to double the number of private banking divisions. The private banking services are intended mainly for private customers with financial assets of about NIS 110,000, representing 56 percent of the population.

Polgat signs cooperation deal with Polo Ralph Lauren

By GALIT LIPKIS BECK

Polgat, a subsidiary of Clal Industries, has signed a license agreement giving it the right to manufacture, distribute, and sell Polo Ralph Lauren textile products here.

Ralph Lauren is among the leading designer companies in the world with sales of \$5 billion a year.

The privately-held company's products are sold in 75 countries. Polgat has sales of about \$180m. a year.

According to the agreement, Polgat will distribute Ralph Lauren's men's and women's jeans, boys' wear, and accessories.

Polgat shares increased the maximum 10 percent on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange yesterday, in reaction to the companies announcement.

The company's products will be

launched in August with the opening of three flagship stores in Tel Aviv, a Polo Ralph Lauren store, a Polo Sport store, and a Polo jeans store.

In the next three years, Polgat intends to open 30 stores throughout the country.

The agreement was signed at the start of the week in New York in the presence of Michael Newman, vice chairman of Polo Ralph Lauren, and Mordechai Baron, president of Polgat.

The license will be valid until the end of 2001. Polgat has an option to extend the contract until 2004.

"Israel is becoming a major economic center through business and tourism for the entire Middle East, and Polo Ralph Lauren's arrival underlines the opportunities for prosperity in the region," said Baron.

| ISRAELI MONEY MARKETS | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|-----------|--------|--------------|
| Patah (foreign currency deposit rates) (1/1.9.96) | | | | | |
| Currency (deposit for) | 3 MONTHS | 6 MONTHS | 12 MONTHS | | |
| U.S. dollar (\$250,000) | 4.750 | 5.000 | 5.275 | | |
| Pound sterling (£100,000) | 3.875 | 4.000 | 4.250 | | |
| German mark (DM 200,000) | 1.825 | 1.825 | 2.125 | | |
| Swiss franc (SF 200,000) | 0.825 | 0.750 | 1.000 | | |
| Yen (10 million yen) | | | | | |
| (Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit) | | | | | |
| Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (27.1.97) | | | | | |
| CHECKS AND TRANSFERS | BUY | | SELL | | Rep. Rates** |
| | Buy | Sell | Buy | Sell | |
| Currency basket | 3.5916 | 3.6486 | 3.6247 | 3.6247 | |
| U.S. dollar | 3.2741 | 3.3270 | 3.21 | 3.308 | 3.3088 |
| German mark | 2.0003 | 2.0328 | 1.96 | 2.07 | 2.0175 |
| Pound sterling | 1.3304 | 1.4033 | 1.22 | 1.49 | 1.3567 |
| French franc | 0.5831 | 0.6027 | 0.58 | 0.62 | 0.5985 |
| Japanese yen (100) | 2.7470 | 2.7914 | 2.68 | 2.84 | 2.7885 |
| Dutch florin | 1.7808 | 1.8308 | 1.76 | 1.84 | 1.7981 |
| Swiss franc | 2.4146 | 2.5000 | 2.36 | 2.50 | 2.5331 |
| Swedish krona | 0.9526 | 0.9800 | 0.44 | 0.47 | 0.4586 |
| Norwegian krona | 0.5023 | 0.5105 | 0.49 | 0.52 | 0.5082 |
| Denish krona | 0.2546 | 0.2631 | 0.25 | 0.26 | 0.2581 |
| Finnish mark | 0.6759 | 0.6989 | 0.66 | 0.70 | 0.6815 |
| Canadian dollar | 2.4348 | 2.4742 | 2.39 | 2.51 | 2.4584 |
| Australian dollar | 2.8276 | 2.8684 | 2.78 | 2.91 | 2.8384 |
| S. African rand | 0.7134 | 0.7250 | 0.64 | 0.71 | 0.7211 |
| Belgian franc (10) | 0.9897 | 0.9854 | 0.95 | 1.00 | 0.9788 |
| Austrian schilling (10) | 2.5435 | 2.5894 | 2.78 | 2.83 | 2.8677 |
| Italian lire (1000) | 2.0524 | 2.0552 | 2.01 | 2.12 | 2.0389 |
| Jordanian dinar | 4.5500 | 4.8800 | 4.55 | 4.86 | 4.8870 |
| Egyptian pound | 0.9800 | 1.0100 | 0.98 | 1.01 | 1.0168 |
| C.L. | 3.8942 | 3.9489 | 3.89 | 4.00 | 3.9161 |
| Irish punt | 5.2435 | 5.3281 | 5.15 | 5.41 | 5.2787 |
| Spanish peseta (100) | 2.3789 | 2.4163 | 2.33 | 2.45 | 2.3980 |

*These rates vary according to bank. **Bank of Israel. SOURCE: BANK LEUMI

"A fax for you"
All you want to know about your accounts, on your fax, within 15 minutes.

15 minutes and you're done...

ISRAEL DISCOUNT BANK

Handwritten text in Arabic script: "معلومات ايجاز"

Handwritten text at the top of the page, possibly a date or page number.

The Jerusalem Post Tuesday, January 28, 1997

BUSINESS & FINANCE

ISRAELI SHARES IN NEW YORK

Table listing Israeli shares in New York with columns for Last and Change.

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TASE ROUNDUP

Shares rebound ahead of interest-rate cut

By ROBERT DANIEL

Shares rebounded on optimism Central Bank Governor Jacob Frenkel would cut interest rates.

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Key Representative Rates

Table showing key representative rates.

NEW YORK MARKET INDEXES

Table showing New York market indexes.

WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP

Eurobourses dip

LONDON (Reuters) - European bourses, which had drifted flat or mixed in thin trade all day, closed generally lower yesterday.

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NYSE STOCKS

Table showing NYSE stocks.

OTHER STOCK MARKET INDEXES

Table showing other stock market indexes.

DOLLAR CROSS-RATES (US)

Table showing dollar cross-rates.

US COMMODITIES

Table showing US commodities.

LONDON COMMODITIES

Table showing London commodities.

SPOT MARKET METALS (US)

Table showing spot market metals.

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Table showing New York metal futures.

LONDON METAL FIXES

Table showing London metal fixes.

LONDON

Table showing London market data.

PARIS

Table showing Paris market data.

FRANKFURT

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WALL STREET REPORT

Blue-chips extend losing streak

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WHERE TO GO

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JERUSALEM

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TEL AVIV

Museums

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EMERGENCY PHARMACIES

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England storms back

AUCKLAND (Reuter) - England skidded New Zealand's opening batsmen in the second innings to press for an improbable victory in the first cricket Test at Eden Park yesterday.

At stumps on the fourth day, New Zealand was 56 for three in its second innings, with Adam Parore on 16 and captain Lee Germon, coming in as nightwatchman, on four.

New Zealand still trails England by 75 runs overall but its prospects of batting through for the draw were severely dented by the England bowlers in the final session of the day's play.

Dominic Cork produced a lively new-ball burst to have Bryan Young taken at fourth slip, after a juggle, by Nasser Hussain for three.

Blair Pocock went shortly afterwards, leg-before-wicket to a full length delivery from Darren Gough, and the game swung significantly England's way three overs before stumps.

Then first-innings century-maker Stephen Fleming was out prodding forward to Phil Tufnell, the ball popping up to John Crawley at short leg to the undisputed delight of the English players.

England resumed this morning at 306 for six and went through to 521 all out at tea in reply to New Zealand's first innings 390.

Left-hander Graham Thorpe became the third century-maker in the match, scoring 119 off 245

balls with 17 fours. It was his third hundred in his 35th Test. He added 114 for the seventh wicket with Cork, who made 59, and there was a 10th wicket partnership of 43 in 55 minutes between Alan Mullally and Tufnell.

That gave the tourists a 131-run lead.

New Zealand's hopes now rest with Parore and Germon, with Nathan Astle, Justin Vaughan and Chris Cairns to follow.

Australia-West Indies West Indies master batsman Brian Lara ended his longest slump in test cricket with a defiant display of big hitting on the third day of the fourth Test match against Australia.

But Lara's 65 not out, including 11 fours and two sixes, appeared a virtual oasis in a West Indies batting desert, as four wickets fell about him in the final session to leave his team 154 for six at the close of play.

The West Indies have the mammoth task of reaching 387 with just four wickets in hand on a turning pitch to make Australia bat again.

Australia, who lead the best of five match series 2-1, is now virtually assured of a victory, which would deliver a series win and allow them to retain the Frank Worrell trophy they won in the Caribbean in 1995.

West Indies 1st Innings 130

Australia 1st Innings

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| M. TAYLOR lbw b Bishop | 11 |
| M. HAYDEN st Murray b Hooper | 125 |
| J. LANGER c Murray b Cully | 18 |
| M. WATSON c Murray b Hooper | 82 |
| S. WAUGH c Hooper b Chanderpaul | 28 |
| G. BLEWETT b Cully | 99 |
| M. BEVAN not out | 86 |
| I. HEALY c Lara b Thompson | 12 |
| S. WARNE c Hooper b Bishop | 9 |
| A. BICHEL not out c Lara b Walsh | 7 |
| G. McGRATH b Walsh | 1 |
| Extras (2b 4w 2nb) | 41 |
| TOTAL | 517 |

Fall of wickets: 35, 78, 242, 288, 288, 453, 475, 494, 507, McGrath.

Bowling: Courtney Walsh 37.3-6-101-2 (5nb), Ian Bishop 34-6-92-2 (11nb 1w), Cameron Cully 33-4-116-2 (4nb 2w), Patterson Thompson 18-0-80-1 (1w), Carl Hooper 18-1-85-2, Jimmy Adams 5-0-23-0, Shivnarine Chanderpaul 3-1-2-1.

Batting time: 685 minutes. Overs: 162.3.

West Indies 2nd Innings

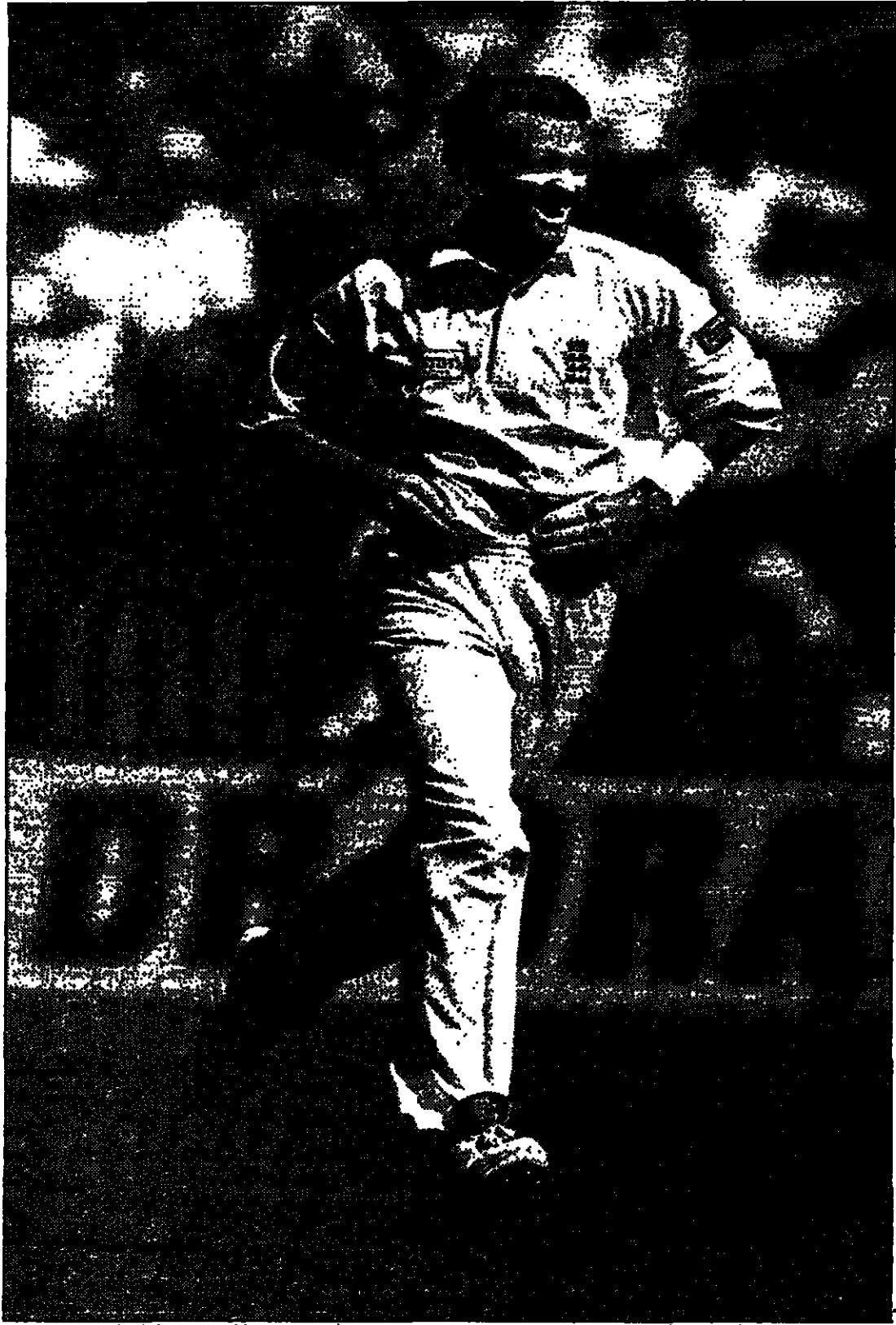
Australia 2nd Innings

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| S. CAMPBELL c Taylor b Bevan | 24 |
| A. GRIFFITH c Steve Waugh b McGrath | 1 |
| S. CHANDERPAUL c Taylor b Bevan | 8 |
| B. LARA not out | 65 |
| C. HOOPER lbw b Warne | 45 |
| J. ADAMS c Mark Waugh b Bevan | 0 |
| L. BISHOP c Bevan b Warne | 0 |
| Extras (5b, 6nb) | 11 |
| TOTAL | 154 for six wickets. |

Fall of wickets: 6, 22, 42, 138, 145, 154.

Bowling: Dominic Cork 7-3-17-1, Alan Mullally 7-4-5-0, Craig White 3-1-6-0 (1nb), Darren Gough 7-1-16-1 (2nb), Phil Tufnell 5-1-12-1 (1nb).

Overs: 29.



ON THE RUN - England fast bowler Dominic Cork trots jubilantly towards his teammates after dismissing New Zealand's Bryan Young yesterday.

Rabkin falls short in indoor bowls

By HEATHER CHAIT - Jeff Rabkin obviously prefers the outdoor life. Playing this week in the World Indoor Lawn Bowls Championships in Preston, England, Rabkin could not repeat his runner-up success of the World Outdoor Lawn Bowls Championships. In the singles, Rabkin lost 3-1 in the first round to Scotsman David Guemay while in the pairs, Rabkin and partner Neil Burckett of South Africa, lost by the same score in the first round to Adrian Welsh and David La Marquard from the Channel Isles.

GOLF: Caesarea's golf club hosted 92 players in a better ball strokeplay tournament over the weekend. The winners were Michael Bardago and Dan Rosen with a ten under par 63. Dan Shalbar and Tamir Harlap were in second, just one stroke behind at nine under. The third spot was more crowded as three teams tied with 66 each: Eli Gitlin and Solly Friedman, Ron Sandler and Moshe Namdar, and Toki Shapira and Yoram Arbel.

ATHLETICS: Haifa's athletic stadium was the venue for some pleasing results at this early stage of the season. Philip Feingold won the 600 meters in 1:22.8, ahead of Ilan Moradi in 1:23.2. Kfir Golan won the 60m in 6:51 seconds while Roger Nahum managed 16.30m in the triple jump. Ziva Eitzi won the women's 60m in 8:00s, with Anat Morad in 8:15s but Morad had her revenge in the 60m hurdles, winning in 9:21s.

TENNIS: The national team enjoyed success in an international competition in Bilbao, Spain. Tamar Golan beat Spain's Maita Vaskaz, bronze medalist at the last world championships. David Malchi brought home a gold medal for his two wins. The other team members were Adi Davidov, Dotan Cohen and Aviad Bloch. Next Tuesday Petah Tikva will host an open tournament at 4pm for youth and seniors. Call (03) 930-0047 to register.

BASKETBALL: The evening was sponsored by Elite to mark 100 years - 40 years of coffee and 60 of chocolate - but back in 1977 it sure tasted sweeter for Maccabi Tel Aviv. This was no normal game - besides only 15 minutes each half and a crowd restricted to Elite invitees - the five heroes of the '77 European basketball win opened the game. Mickey Berkowitz, Lou Silver, Motti Aroesti, Jim Boatwright and Aulcie Perry relived the moments of magic but went down 65-47 to the team of Europe's greats from the '70s.

OLYMPICS: If you're apartment hunting and in pretty good shape, wait around for the year 2000. The contractor, Shmuel Ofiner, has promised a three-room apartment in one of his projects in Rishon LeZion. He's looking to the local athletes who bring home a gold medal from the Olympics in Sydney.

HANDBALL: The national team faces an important match tomorrow night in the qualifying rounds of the European Championships. The team will play Greece at Hadar Yosef stadium at 6:30pm and a win will advance them to the next round against Slovenia, France and the Czech Republic.

Knicks keep Riley from All-Star game

NEW YORK (AP) - The New York Knicks kept Pat Riley out of the All-Star game Sunday with their 14th straight home victory, a 95-89 decision over the Miami Heat in a matchup of the top two teams in the Atlantic Division.

Patrick Ewing scored 24 points, Allan Houston had 17 and Charles Oakley 16 for the Knicks, who haven't lost at home since Dec. 3 when the Heat beat them by 24.

The victory prevented Riley from coaching the Eastern Conference All-Stars in two weeks. Since Phil Jackson of Chicago can't coach the All-Stars two years in a row, the spot goes to the coach with the next-best record through Sunday's games.

A victory would have done it for SUNDAY'S RESULTS: New York 95, Miami 89 Milwaukee 94, San Antonio 76 L.A. Lakers 104, Seattle 103

Kansas stays unanimous No. 1

NEW YORK (AP) - Kansas remained the only unbeaten Division I team and the unanimous No. 1 in the college basketball poll yesterday, while Wake Forest moved back into the No. 2 spot.

The Jayhawks (20-0) received all 70 first-place votes and 1,750 points from the national media panel. It was their ninth straight week on top of the poll and the second in a row as a unanimous pick. The nine-week run at No. 1 matches the streak by Massachusetts last season. The longest run on top before that was Duke's season sweep in 1991-92.

Wake Forest (15-1), which beat Clemson and Florida State by three points each, moved up two places to follow Kansas in the voting for the eighth of the last nine weeks. The Demon Deacons had 1,645 points, 22 more than

Kashtan takes helm at Hapoel Tel Aviv

By ORI LEWIS - THE post-Sinai era at Hapoel Tel Aviv soccer club began yesterday with the appointment of Dror Kashtan as their club's new coach.

Kashtan, who has seen great success in the past with Hapoel Kfar Sava, Betar Jerusalem and Maccabi Tel Aviv, appears to be up against it this time, as his new (very poor) club will need all the help it can get to stay in the National League.

There are still no buyers for Hapoel Tel Aviv, a former powerhouse of Israeli soccer. Even after ridding itself of Moshe Sinai, the former coach, who was seen as a liability, the Histadrut has been unable to sell the club and will run the side until the end of the season. The Histadrut has already paid Sinai part of his severance pay to the tune of NIS1 million, with the final settlement to be worked out at a later date. The club is also uncertain about the future of two of its international stars, Felix Halfon and Alon Hazan. Halfon is adamant about leaving for Maccabi Tel Aviv, although the club does not want to let him go, Hazan has yet to decide his next moves.

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SPORTS

in brief

Ditka: Pll take Saints job

Mike Ditka will return to the NFL as the new coach of the New Orleans Saints, it was reported yesterday. "I'm going to climb the mountain one more time. It's going to be fun," Ditka said during yesterday's Super Bowl game, the Chicago Sun-Times reported. An announcement from the Saints is expected this week. AP

Reds sign Pendleton

Infielder Terry Pendleton and the Cincinnati Reds agreed Monday to a minor-league contract. Pendleton, a 36-year-old switch-hitter, hit 238 with 11 homers and 75 RBIs last season for the Florida Marlins and Atlanta Braves. AP

NHL SCOREBOARD

SUNDAY'S RESULTS: Edmonton 3, Washington 1; Pittsburgh 5, Montreal 2.

| EASTERN CONFERENCE | | | | | WESTERN CONFERENCE | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|-----|----|--------------------|-------------|----|----|-----|----|-----|-----|
| Atlantic Division | | | | | Central Division | | | | | | | |
| W | L | T | Pts | GF | GA | W | L | T | Pts | GF | GA | |
| Philadelphia | 27 | 14 | 7 | 61 | 153 | Dallas | 27 | 17 | 4 | 53 | 143 | 117 |
| Florida | 24 | 14 | 10 | 58 | 138 | Detroit | 22 | 16 | 9 | 63 | 143 | 106 |
| N.Y. Rangers | 25 | 19 | 7 | 57 | 177 | St. Louis | 23 | 22 | 4 | 50 | 148 | 155 |
| New Jersey | 24 | 17 | 5 | 33 | 121 | Phoenix | 21 | 23 | 4 | 46 | 135 | 153 |
| Washington | 20 | 24 | 5 | 43 | 130 | Chicago | 17 | 26 | 6 | 42 | 129 | 138 |
| Tampa Bay | 18 | 22 | 6 | 42 | 133 | Toronto | 19 | 30 | 0 | 38 | 147 | 171 |
| N.Y. Islanders | 16 | 23 | 9 | 41 | 133 | | | | | | | |
| Northeast Division | | | | | Pacific Division | | | | | | | |
| Pittsburgh | 27 | 17 | 5 | 59 | 183 | Colorado | 29 | 12 | 8 | 83 | 165 | 115 |
| Buffalo | 25 | 19 | 5 | 55 | 141 | Edmonton | 23 | 22 | 5 | 51 | 180 | 180 |
| Hartford | 20 | 21 | 7 | 47 | 140 | Vancouver | 18 | 23 | 6 | 42 | 133 | 143 |
| Montreal | 18 | 24 | 8 | 44 | 157 | Calgary | 17 | 26 | 6 | 40 | 118 | 142 |
| Boston | 18 | 24 | 6 | 42 | 140 | Los Angeles | 17 | 25 | 6 | 40 | 129 | 182 |
| Ottawa | 14 | 22 | 9 | 37 | 122 | San Jose | 17 | 24 | 5 | 39 | 121 | 146 |



TOP RACKET - Pete Sampras set a record for the highest number of points in the world tennis rankings with 5,774 following his win at the Australian Open, the ATP Tour said yesterday. The previous record was set by Andre Agassi with 5,652 points on August 28, 1995.

ATP Rankings

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Pete Sampras (US) 5,774 points | 11. Albert Costa (Spain) 2,036 |
| 2. Goran Ivanisevic (Croatia) 3,588 | 12. Andre Agassi (U.S.) 5,549 |
| 3. Thomas Muster (Austria) 3,492 | 13. Boris Becker (Germany) 1,931 |
| 4. Michael Chang (US) 3,417 | 14. Todd Martin (US) 1,940 |
| 5. Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Russia) 3,387 | 15. Felix Mantilla (Spain) 1,888 |
| 6. Richard Krajicek (Netherlands) 2,371 | 16. Tim Henman (Great Britain) 1,857 |
| 7. Marcelo Pilos (Chile) 2,329 | 17. Stefan Edberg (Sweden) 1,581 |
| 8. Wayne Ferreira (South Africa) 2,221 | 18. Magnus Gustafsson (Sweden) 1,537 |
| 9. Carlos Moya (Spain) 2,171 | 19. Michael Stich (Germany) 1,516 |
| 10. Thomas Enqvist (Sweden) 2,086 | 20. Alberto Berasategui (Spain) 1,477 |

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Sharansky visits with his past

By ABRAHAM RABINOVICH

MOSCOW — Like a tour guide to his own life, Natan Sharansky yesterday pointed to the statue of Alexander Pushkin behind him and the small square around it. "A very interesting place in the heart of Moscow," he told a handful of reporters accompanying him. "Here began the demonstrations of the human rights dissidents, and here we Jewish demonstrators joined them."

Sharansky had barely had two hours' sleep since arriving in the middle of the night for the first time since being freed from nine years of Soviet captivity 11 years ago in an East-West swap. He had been hustled out of Moscow then on a KGB plane. Now minister of industry and trade, he returned as an official guest of the Russian government.

There would be trade talks in the afternoon with senior Russian officials, but Sharansky's first hours on

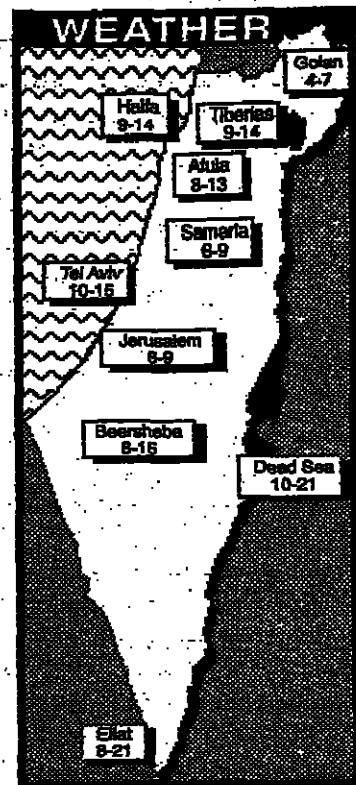
Russian soil were spent coming to terms with the past. He set out before dawn to visit his father's grave in a Jewish cemetery outside Moscow. Sharansky's father had died while he was in prison and he had never visited the grave. Trudging through the snow, he stood silent before the grave for a long time.

"I had chosen the line on the tombstone from the psalms while I was in prison," he said. "It says: 'May he rest in peace and may his seed prosper in Israel.' He lies here but his memory is in Israel."

The first place he chose to visit in the city was Pushkin Square where he had demonstrated in the 1970s for the right of Jews to emigrate to Israel. His first demonstrations were with human rights activists led by physicist Andrei Sakharov. Sharansky pointed to the nearby *Izvestia* newspaper building near where Jewish activists began holding their own demonstrations two years later.



Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky walks near his former apartment in Moscow yesterday. (Reuter)



AROUND THE WORLD

| Location | Low | High | Forecast | | |
|--------------|-----|------|----------|----|-------|
| Amsterdam | -04 | 22 | 01 | 34 | clear |
| Berlin | -08 | 23 | 01 | 34 | clear |
| Buenos Aires | 23 | 73 | 30 | 91 | rain |
| Oslo | 32 | 45 | 30 | 38 | clear |
| Chicago | -07 | 18 | -07 | 19 | snow |

Winning cards

In yesterday's daily Chance drawing, the winning cards were the jack of spades, the queen of hearts, the eight of diamonds and the 10 of clubs.

MKs slam air pollution

Some 1,000 people a year die in Israel of problems related to air pollution, MK Michael Kleiner (Geshet) told the Knesset plenum yesterday. He demanded the Tel Aviv municipality publish the figures for air pollution in the area.

MK Rehavam Ze'evi (Moledet) noted air pollution primarily affects children and older people. Environment Minister Rafael Eitan (Tsomot) said the ministry is acting on establishing an air monitoring station in Tel Aviv as part of a national network and is acting first to improve the quality of fuels and later for more and more environment-friendly public transport.

Eitan this week blasted the Trans-Israel Highway (Road No. 6) and said public transport should be given priority over private vehicles.

Liat Collins

Peres blasts proposed conversion legislation

By GREER FAY CASHMAN

The proposed conversion law to negate the status of Conservative and Reform converts was described last night by Labor party chairman Shimon Peres as "an outrage."

"We have to decide if this is a state of aliyah or a state of yerida," Peres told reporters at the closing session of Hadassah's mid-winter conference in Jerusalem.

People who live here, pay taxes and serve in the army should be allowed to pursue their own religious convictions, he advocated.

Lambasting the Likud, Peres commented: "They accused us of wanting to divide the country. Now that they've agreed to divide the country, they're also dividing the people."

"I don't believe that the main

problem is the relationship between religious Jews and secular Jews, but between religious and secular parties. If we want to privatize so much, we have to privatize religion," he said.

In his address to the Hadassah National Board, Peres emphasized the need to put more quality into Israel to make it more attractive to future generations.

"We can't keep our children just on the memory of the Holocaust and the fear that the Arabs will attack us," he said.

Peres also warned of the need to remain alert to Iranian fundamentalism and the threat that it represents not only to Israel, but to the Arab world.

"We didn't recognize the dangers of Stalin and the dangers of Hitler before it was too late," he recalled. "Now, we have to recognize the dangers in time."

Shahak: IDF motivation on the rise

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

There are signs that there has been a turnaround in the drop in motivation to serve in combat units, but more has to be done to increase the value of contributing to the state, Chief of General Staff Lt-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak said yesterday.

Speaking before the annual gathering of youth educators and teachers, Shahak said today's youth are demanding more and society has to provide the answers.

"I think we are doing a lot, but in some areas we are stunned. I think there is a lack of clarity and emphasis on what is important. What are the clear priorities of the national agenda for which there is consensus? What are the values of Israeli society today?" Shahak said.

"I think it is easy to explain to youth today why defense is important. When you speak clearly to them they understand clearly. When we tell them the value of service, and

of combat service to those who are able, and are clear about it, so are they," Shahak told the conference.

The Jerusalem forum was amended by top IDF brass and focused on the "challenges of the youth for the 50th year of statehood."

Despite the optimistic atmosphere involving singing youth groups and stalls of educational bodies hawk their services, some officials said the job is not going to be so easy.

"This is all a very nice show, but the problem is that it is empty of spirit," said a senior Defense Ministry official involved with increasing youth motivation.

Shahak said that talking openly about the growing number of people who evade the army has been beneficial, and there are signs it is having the effect the military establishment wanted.

"It's not nice to speak of evasion, but they [the youth] have started

condemning it," Shahak said.

He said the public debate on the problem of motivation had borne fruit in the recent draft.

"In the last draft we had very gladdening signs. Some of them are changes which if they continue will have a positive effect."

Shahak said changes have also been felt in the problem of evasion from reserve duty.

However, he did not provide data backing up either claim.

Chief of Staff praises Western immigrant soldiers

New immigrants from Western countries serving in the army received some praise from the chief of staff yesterday, who said they could teach Israeli youth a thing or two about Zionism.

Lt-Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak said he periodically meets with immigrant, lone soldiers who left their families behind in the United States, France and other Western countries.

"We are ashamed," Shahak said, "to speak of values and of Zionism. But these kids find themselves in uniform and within two months know the language. They are giving me lectures on Zionism without blushing, without becoming confused and speaking in a way we used to speak dozens of years ago," Shahak told a gathering of educators in Jerusalem yesterday.

Arieh O'Sullivan

France's Jewish property probe: 'A past which will not pass away'

PARIS (Reuter) — France's decision to probe the fate of Jewish property seized during the wartime Nazi occupation has brought back to the surface what historians are increasingly calling "a past which will not pass away."

Prime Minister Alain Juppe, addressing Jewish leaders on Saturday, announced the appointment — perhaps as early as this week — of a commission to probe the scope of seizures by the Nazis and by their Vichy French collaborators from 1940 to 1944.

Juppe's decision follows increasing calls for the government to clarify the status of an unknown amount of property

never returned to its rightful owners after the war, mostly because they were killed in gas chambers.

A recent book said authorities in 1944 took over from the retreating Germans — and still administered — possibly hundreds of flats left vacant by Jews killed in concentration camps.

A government body recently determined that 1,995 works of art seized from Jews were still "provisionally" in the care of French museums more than 50 years after the war.

Juppe's announcement followed moves to shed light on the dark years of World War II in other countries including neutral Switzerland and Sweden, which

have both been accused of profitably dealing with the Nazis and being paid in gold seized from their Jewish victims.

"This affair [in France] not only deals with reparations for the victims. It also has to do with the image that France has of itself," wrote the *Le Monde* newspaper. "This is not a question of monetary compensation, it is a moral issue where the truth must be made known so that we can make peace with the past," said Henri Hajdenberg, president of the Council of French Jewish Institution (CRIF).

Nazi hunters Serge and Arno Klarsfeld however said the gov-

ernment should recommend that orphans excluded from reparations paid after the war because their parents were not French nationals should now be compensated.

"There are a number of real scandals which must be exposed and the most crying one of all is that West Germany paid France a huge sum after the war to compensate victims of the Nazis," Arno Klarsfeld said.

"France paid out the money to French Jews and non-Jews but excluded children born in France of foreign parents even though their parents were arrested by [Vichy] French police who handed them to the Nazis."

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